

Mark Wasserman

HONEYMOON AND GREYBEARD LOON

Hypnotist weather again, my love. Building-tops
bud through a topsoil of fog and we're lost
at home. Before your eyes open, before sleep

drains from your face, I will pray for a kinder
awakening. I must. Ah, to think I used to breathe
hope like lighter fluid . . .

And the rooftop cats are staring back
and puckering their paws.

Trust only the temporal. Retain your stubs
anyway. Gray will stay. Our fog is but the sea
grown curious, nosing ashore in white
surgeon mask, white surgeon fingers.

Quick: in case we're blotted out utterly,
this is what I knew of how to live:
we must forgive and then forgive
again. In yesterday's drizzle my briefcase went

mis-shapen. I have put it beneath my mattress
for the next. Good-bye pretty city,

diorama of all my dreams. I shall wander
you no more. Comes the white stole of heaven
draping the church shoulders in dainty death.

And the rooftop cats are staring back
and puckering their paws.

The church sighs like a junky bride
stoned at her own wedding, wreathed
in white madness. By now the spindrift
has reached our downtown, bequeathing all
a milky calm. *Thought is a vapor.*
Gray will stay, my love. Look:

Two birds like lost math problems . . .

I've always known you, Old Whitesmoke,
Old Deathbreath. Come disappear
me then. The fog-horn betrays you each morning
like a ghost blowing riffs on his oboe.

Beneath the Bay Bridge a freshly-shaved hobo
is getting early foot to Portland.

Something must come of it. Something
clean, and alabaster as a baby dove; precious too,
like baby teeth not yet uprooted

by the treacherous grit of this world. Who knows
where those teeth go? Some we tied
to doorknobs and slammed. Some to kites
and released. In any case, they were
confiscated. Remember.

And the rooftop cats are glaring back
and daring me to jump.

I'll say it: years accrete like plaque and we
were never briefed. Wake up now, darling. Tell
how it all lactates backwards or I'll take
the cats at their word.

Deep in the city's ribs a hidden cable
clangs its tambourine-song like a lost
troupe of tin men. Alive! Those baby
teeth are coming down
on pillow-case parachutes, snowing

onto a Thursday dull. They're seeding
the streets, the tops of antique shops.
Our gums lightly twitch. Go ask anyone:
No one can know what will grow.