

Jon Anderson

EXILED ON MOUNTAIN, BEWAIL FATE &
PRAISE AUTUMN

Now that I'm actually living my solitude I'm clueless.
Every now & then the wind drops in & I look at it.
These are the signs of seasonal change: I'm not sweating,
& the hollow of air in the chimney makes a thrumming noise.
The doves outside my house look like they're waiting
at a bus stop & puff into little black & grey pots when
the wind blows or when the rain comes down in columns.
Now that it's quiet in my house I can't really think
without thinking & I can't really talk without meaning
something else, so I shut up. Some days I wish I was
back at the factory, moving heavy objects & grunting.

They start out looking for a handout, then get used to it,
the birds. What's weird is I think they don't know why
they come anymore now that I've stopped feeding them.
Frankly, they tend to be undifferentiated & cutely stupid.
Once, when one fell off the wall, I thought I had something,
it was so embarrassed, lying there like a ruffled pompom
with a black tack for a head. Turned out it was dead.
I was so alienated I mailed it back without a stamp, but
I said this prayer for it: *Bless every living thing.* . . .

I didn't mean to exclude it.

Shortly afterward I was bombed by a traveling flock
of chickadees fresh from a meeting on a rotten stump.
When you're alone every damn word you say has got
to be how you feel, & then you've got to live with it.
I think I'll entertain myself by not experiencing anything.
Word on the mountain is that the *wabi* of consciousness
is all your living minus all your accumulated experience.
That's why the chickadees attacked, because I'd blown it.