

LAME ANGEL

Lame Angel slumps at his desk. His basket is empty,
but his hand clasps and unclasps the indifferent air
like an embryo practicing its grip.

Like an embryo, he practices everything,
swimming, creeping, chinning himself on the cord,
even flying in place.

Under his shirt his downy shoulderblades
throb like a deer's first horns.
He scrapes them against his chair.

Sometimes, in high places, he goes to use them,
as a one-legged man might run from a burning house.
He'll die before they sprout.

Clenched in his teeth, perhaps, a morsel of wind,
a worm rehearsing perpetually the life
of a butterfly, but a worm to the end.