

Chase Twichell

THE VERGE

Inside language there was always
an inkling,
a dark vein branching,

bird-tracks in river sand spelling out
the fact of themselves,

asking me to come toward them
and scratch among them with a stick
all the secrets I could no longer keep,

until my words were nothing
but lovely anarchic bird-prints themselves.

I think that's the verge right there,
where the two languages
intertwine, twigs and thorns,

words telling secrets
to no one but river and rain.

PAINT

Lotions and scents, ripe figs,
raw silk, the cat's striped pelt . . .
Fat marbles the universe.

I want to be a faint pencil line
under the important words,
the ones that tell the truth.

Delicious, the animal trace
of the brush in the paint,
crushed caviar of molecules.

A shadow comes to me and says,
When you go, please leave
the leafless branch unlocked.

I paint the goat's yellow eye,
and the latch on truth's door.
Open, eye and door.

SEXUAL GATHA

Come with me to a private room.
I have a secret to show you.
Sometimes I like to stand outside it

with a stranger because I haven't
come at it from that vantage in so long—

see? There I am beside him, still joined,
still kissing. Isn't it dreamlike,
the way the bed drifts in its dishevelment?

Bereft of their clothes, two humans
lie entangled in its cloud.

Their bodies are saying the after-grace,
still dreaming in the language of the cloud.
Look at them, neither two nor one.

I want them to tell me what they know
before the amnesia takes them.