

John Repp

CICADAS

Cicadas in the hot trees rasp
zydeco, clack exoskeletal
flamenco, exhibitionist
rumba, Antonio clapping
hands over his ears. And me?
My God. Thirteen years since Point Breeze.
Missed the first garbage day. Maggots
on wet tar the next. Chris culled

agony from the hive. I chewed
what combs she wedged in my cheeks. She
jammed me in. *Oh honey* we droned.
Bet on it: Expect cattle,
find buffalo; pack a picnic,
hear the pilot fuck The Screamer,
floorboards rumbling Billy Joel.
I find open-casket viewings

barbaric, but, like you, I gape
at a goat skull wedged in creased
dust under the olive, zygote
curled hazy on the monitor,
a mother and gate-mouthed toddler
dead the next minute—women keen,
mobs storm relief trucks, beautiful
as is, suchness, *samsara* is

nirvana. I whooped in the jeep
Klaus careened to the beach—discos,
hambergeur joints, *tourismos*, then
a battalion of bare tits, yes,
breasts and the women they graced, ah,

sashay of hue and posture
buffing me, Herr Bumpkin Ogle—
forty-three, fifteen, no matter—
and when the day's best beauty spread
oil armpit to belly, oh wind,
oh blue, ought-to-be-bottled
Mediterranean wind, wit
jumped ship, ideas rotted, the beams
of my inner cathedral bowed
under the light's weight. Sexual
healing, Marvin Gaye called it. *Aye!*

shouts Bluebeard in the overgrown
notebooks of my fifteenth summer,
rutting in the Sea Islands,
butchering Choctaw, once lulling
a harem naked with nothing
more than a few strummed chords.
Three decades later I can stroke
the silk they unwrapped from their hips.

Narcissus goes hard to jowl,
bristle, *character*, raw millet
cast on cold cereal, and still
loves the ghost of delight as much
as delight itself—so be it,
straddle the goddamned Rubicon,
bliss unwrapped under the *bodhi*
perhaps six pill bugs curled on tile,

vertigo on the Murcia bus,
scorpion flung from a sandal,
bread a large hand spreads with peach jam,
insects half the size of my fist

working their legs as they die.