

GEORGE EKLUND

THEY CALLED ME THE PRINCE

Always a village is on fire,
Is that enough of an answer?

They called me the prince,
I had no wife or children
I just wanted to break out of what was known

I am just a bird become a man
They chased me until I spoke
Out of my twisted limbs.
The thoughts in my head began to slide
And bleed as they were pulled from each other.

140

What can be said or debated
About the duties of the nerves.
Always a village is on fire
And barefooted people are walking away

Wearing a path through heaven
With gunfire in the hills.

I am just a bird become a man—I thought
I would see less and never have to watch
My village burn
Or feel my child go cold against my ribs.
Who can imagine the duties of the nerves.

They called me the prince.
I kept turning toward mothers in their blinking.
I kept arriving and being turned away.
Soon I must break out of all knowing.