

Two Poems · *Bob Hicok*

85

I didn't expect this.
Windows, the ads for amazing
medical remedies, the recollection
of a stone washed flat by the river,
the one that skipped
eight times before its sleep . . .
I belong to these, and also limp,
cannot eat anything made with milk
or too much passion, hear little
of what is said (there are after all
always compensations) and still think
of what lies beneath a dress but without
the old results. I don't know
if it's a miracle or sin
that I can place my teeth
in a glass of water at night,
and wonder if this stranger's heart
sewn into my chest isn't lonely
and slowly dying of grief, if it
will simply stop and leave me
waving my arms in the air. I
didn't expect any of this,
the moments when I forget
a city, a person, and the days
made up of such moments, perhaps soon
the years, but I'm grateful
for the terror of these surprises,
given how it might have turned out,
given that I expect the alternative
to be nothing at all.