

But I like to think
of that old way, the most common
and slowest, the body disassembled,
diffused, slowly, consumed—particle
by particle, stigma, gradually, by stigma,
cell by cell—converted carefully, transfigured,
transformed, becoming finally both
a passing grain of blue above an early
evening silhouette of oaks and an inflation
of sun in low October fog, both the sight
of bladed wind in beach grasses
and the sound of singing in the wings
of desert bats, becoming as close
to itself as the smooth night skin
lining the skull, as the white moaning
conch of its own hearing, the body
becoming gradually and remarkably
so indisputably so.

WHAT THE SUN GOD SAW ONE SUMMER AFTERNOON

Looking long enough, right before his eyes
he saw the sheaths of leaf and tassel
and stem split and fall, layer
after layer, like transparent skins
from around each stalk, until all the barley
and rushes stood complete and naked,
a thousand narrow blades of white fire
bending and shimmering across the field.

And the smooth asters and sweet clovers,
releasing their outer shells of texture
and fragrance and color, became small perpetual
explosions poised on their glowing stems
in the dazzling roadside ditches.

Without the bronze and violet paper
of their wings or the green of their appendices
or the black beads of their heads,
he could readily identify the dragonflies
as the ignited thrum and simmer shining
over the mudflats of the lowlands.

The seed shrimp, fully revealed
in the pond, he saw as clear boneless
stars ascending and diving among the brilliant
underwater wires of fanwort and fern.
And he watched the red hawk lose,
without relinquishing anything, the scales
and feathers and beak of its body
until it circled over the meadow, a gliding
bird of light alone.

How could he escape knowing then,
on that afternoon, to what *bovine*
and *pepper frog* and *lichen-covered*
granite boulder had always
most resolutely referred?

This was the first gift:
that he came to see everything,
during the moment he saw it,
as steadfastly possessing the one divine
soul of his eyes. What an indispensable,
what a benevolent god! to watch,
to recognize, to thus create and bestow
such necessary majesty.