

## Five Poems · *Margaret Gibson*

### HOME

I have lived many lives since in Venice I saw  
glass blowers shape to their fragile uses each angry breath.  
Now the days come one by one—I predict neither  
memory nor future.

Yet I have seen,  
one twilight in Moscow, a piece of frozen river  
ruffle up into the sky—ice as a pale blue rose  
too distant for tether or root. I rubbed my eyes,  
and the rose broke apart into whip-lines,  
long arcs and Vs—

and I knew they were swans,  
perhaps wild geese, in their mass and sheer  
movement amazing. Near the bridge where I stood  
were skaters. They scored solid ice, their shadows  
long behind them, moving into night. Above  
and below, the world moved one way.  
I have moved with it. That I know.

Where is my home?  
My small life has touched lives in Italy, Los Angeles, Mexico,  
Moscow, Spain. In them all I see the photograph  
Edward took at Tacubaya—I'm sitting in a doorway  
dressed in black, in our courtyard facing past a tree  
and shadows on the wall. The wind that swept Mexico  
is still, the dust is low.

Edward has set his tripod at a distance by the well  
where he washes each morning. I dream  
sun on the *azotea*, the dark room of a new life—  
unaware of the pattern composed as he backs farther  
away and stops down to so great a depth of field  
that the door goes back into darkness forever.  
That dark doorway I call home.

Out on the street, lovers saunter, eating celery.  
Azucenas spill from the windows. Churchbells, anvils,  
roses ring in a single translation: *Vivid, la vida sigue*,  
Live, for life goes on.

None of us has time for a single  
life to stun the air as a flower can, fully realized.

Therefore we gather, *en masse*.

## DARKROOM NIGHTS

One night in Amecameca's Hotel *Sacro Monte*  
I lay awake—the bed hard, the pillows white  
with the geranium and stock we put there.  
Mountains cold, moon aloof—Edward  
shivered as he slept. I couldn't close my eyes.  
I watched a chair cast ribs of shadow on the wall.  
How well they kept their secrets, I thought—  
the things of the world mute, patient.

The bed was a lumpy altar—  
I had been worshipped there, lifted out  
of myself, by the ecstasy of my specific female  
flesh made goddess of the flowers, flush and open.  
I was able to stop time, back to the first time  
we'd touched—let it be always the first time,  
Edward said. Sex is magical thinking—  
water burns, flowers dawn in the stones.  
The first time, in Glendale, he'd looked at me  
first through the camera: an hour's delay,  
glance as touch, and finally, finally touch—  
a slippery transit, beyond all limits.