

Four Poems · *George Shelton*

THE BODY IS BEAUTIFUL

The body is beautiful, air, light,
in speech or mute. Words clothe a moment,
press oil to the forehead, hot, cool.
How you lay naked on a blue blanket.

How I sat up, watched a tall tree.
And you sat, half-sat, half-lay, on
your elbows, cool, hot, cool, and thought
a few good thoughts, so you said and seemed.

It seems now thoughts are all good.
Jane, what a blue blanket you lay on.

MARCH

I was swimming in the sky, the blue sky,
it was lovely, it was easy.
Houses, shrubs, grass, mounds of dirt
clung to the world like food to a carpet.
The trees swayed, the birds walked the air,
and cirrus clouds swung around and off my neck.
Then I saw you defying gravity,
the tap of your heels on the concrete.
On the way to the market?
I dipped down.
You stopped, looked back.
Your hair hung down, or twisted in the wind.
You stared but did not see me.
Forgot something?
You turned off. The asphalt began to leak
gravel and balls of tar, the street rolled,

and I was walking on the sidewalk,
the weight on my knees.
They hurt, I tell you.

THREE FOXES

Outside,
three foxes
and a cleverness you've
never known
in a secret wood with leaf mold
and desire in a long, horizontal nose,

yet a special intellectuality
lifts the breakfast egg from the pan,
and you trust this.

You shower your body,
kicking the baby,
in the head, by the lamp,
brush your teeth,
stepping on your office mate's throat,
comb the hair,
aiming the car bingo
over a cliff.

Look into the mirror with a mouth full of pearls,
shaking the hand of this man you meet each day,
ask how he's doing,
and ignore him the rest of the long day.