

## The Place · *John Lindgren*

Nowhere to sit or lie down here,  
By this four-headed river bearing the immense  
Silence of heaven to the sea whose vague aphorism  
Is spelled on the shores of insomnia and sleep.

The stones here return the blank stares  
Of angels, frost erects its secret ministries  
And stairways only to erase them at dawn,  
And the rain is put to strange uses.

Better to keep walking, born as you are  
So far from yourself, under the heavy machinery  
Of clouds, the sun on its flaming axle, and that rib  
Of moon that calls to the scar in your side.

Wherever you are you bring the emptiness  
Of your hands, the forgetfulness of your feet,  
The darkness of your mouth and a door on your back.  
Glaciers erect their obelisks beneath the stars.

Better not ask to whom they were raised, but go on  
Counting the generations of dust and angels on the head  
Of a pin, or lie down when you can, with a stone  
For a pillow, watching the ladders disappear into the clouds,

And those fantastic shapes ascending and descending  
On their errands that never had you in mind, though you wake  
In the trumpeting light, in the midst of all  
That singing, that praise.