

In Autumn

When within ourselves, we feel the autumn
I become very still, a kind of singing, and try to move
like all things green, in one direction, when within ourselves
the autumn moves, thickening like honey, that light we smear
on faces and hands, then touch the far within one another,
something like autumn, and I think when those who knew
the dead, when they fall asleep, *then what*, then what in autumn
when I always feel I'm writing in red pencil on a piece
of paper growing in thickness the way a pumpkin does,
traveling at fantastic speed toward orange, toward rot, when
in autumn I remember that we are cold-smitten as I continue
smearing red on this precipice, this ledge of paper over
which I lean, trying to touch those I love, their bodies rusting
as I keep writing, sketching their red hands, faces lusting for green.

Mark Irwin

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The Chimpanzee

from another zoo, just transported, clasps one hand
to the cage, tentatively
looking, blinking at jabs of light through trees, before entering

the diorama with its un-
real grass, each blade like the green seconds

crushed within a day's hour. Now the chimp lies in the shape
of a comma, a pause in a sentence having taken

millions of years to arrive. What

would you do? It stood and looked
at dimensionless walls, a veldt pasteled with trees, then suddenly
stopped, the way

a cliff might, then continued the way a child too eager suddenly arrives
at old age.

Mark Irwin
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Shimmer

A high-rise lobby mirror is lobbing
suited bodies back and forth while ten thousand
blue screens flicker toward a new ocean
we navigate from land, but to throw a window open
with the entire force of your body's not the same as pushing
a power button on a laptop, or a remote
electronic detonator. Watch this in your room
along with the Ilulissat Glacier melting, the portable
become monstrous illusion. Like the man watching late TV
who shoots his sleeping wife. Just a bad dream,
he tells her, then soothes her back to sleep before
shooting himself. The smoggy stars above
the city's flickering lights—fire thrown down and back—just look
from any jet and marvel at the astral make-up, a grave
of aging, prickling light.

Mark Irwin
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Toward Where We Are

Now light turns the room a deep orange at dusk and you think you are floating, but in truth you are falling, and the fall is slow, yet precise, like climbing a ladder of straw. Now leaning forward, you open your hands that keep opening. Is this what *Yes* feels like? Making a shore where no water was?

Mark Irwin

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