

## WHITE CITY

Shirtsleeved, walking out into the spring, occasionally  
we glimpse a white city. We see it in the tiny lilies  
belled within shade, and its taste, like gin or lemon, slightly  
burns the tongue. Mushrooms drop their spores, while a faint  
static mixed with song strays from open windows. Winter's unremembrance  
is gone. Flowers walk among our hands. We do not know  
which touch is which. Sunlight drizzles through green, and the magnolia's  
thick vanilla scent makes the mind go numb. This dislocation  
which feeling is. Distant, fossil-boned, the city  
shines. We approach it in our dreams, or see at dusk its thousand  
yellow windows hived. Toward it invisibly we move  
the way flowers move toward sun. Desire moves  
in our wings.--Rain then sunlight shivers through cloud  
until it seems the paper houses might dissolve. Irises poise  
to unfold. Pollen blows across the ground, and in our houses  
a bright-seamed light leaks beneath doors. We move  
and are moved by what shines, and there is a distance  
forever vanishing between our bodies.

Mark Irwin

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## NO CONTINUING CITY

between two *whens* between  
two *whens* man made a godflashthing

and the bees leaned deeply  
into the flower. Please measure my weakness

with your power. What is  
the half life of a moment? What beauty

is chance changing us  
so quickly? More slowly, how sweetly

you blur the contours of my  
body. The price of knowledge is

\* \* \*

nature. And the quick jacket of light clothed everyone.  
And the light was wedded  
to the darkness. And the earth

was wedded to the sky. And the water  
was wedded to the water. And the water  
was wedded to the fire.

How dark into the far do the dead sail?

\* \* \*

And the transom of light leapt to an ocean of shadow.

Pouring out over the bridges the knocking sound  
of bodies.

Pouring out over the bridges  
the knocking sound of bodies.

--Words  
in a verbflash torn out of their mouths.

\* \* \*

And Jisenji temple that had vanished  
And the unopened tin of mandarin oranges  
And the black rice and the black trees and the black people

\* \* \*

"Thou still unravish'd" now  
let the act begin now let the bees  
hungry gold priests drowse with the sweet taste

of --. What is that "lowing  
at the skies?" Now "Leadst thou  
that heifer" and push the tungstening bright

flash down over the land?

Mark Irwin  
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## HORSE

On a metal table, a horse's heart and lungs.  
I stare the slow miles down. July, the Rio

Grande's green tongue. Desert nights, crystal  
animals, --a silver throw of stars. Constellations

stalked us: Love's incredible velocity  
standing still. The left ventricle's giant balloon

still filled with blood: a rushing in my ears, wind  
through juniper and sagebrush, on red rim

rock a clattering of hooves. *Will you, will you,*  
I said. The coarse mane and straining neck,

the frantic whites of the eyes. The *Sangres*, snowy,  
astonished us, as we were to each other, always close-

up & far away. The left ventricle courses fresh blood  
throughout the horse's body. The right ventricle

sends blood to the ochreous lungs. Canyons sleep  
in our straw hearts. Breathing is what saves

us. Anonymity lives in that rust-turreted land. We  
made up new names, places without destination. I

once said *I love you*. Somewhere those words still  
stand, a ruined adobe chimney. History changes easily

when people talk too much, or are simply struck  
speechless. The skull's stark white light

frees us. Now I want to push my hands into each  
of the heart's great cavities. My hands are heavy

& red with the earth. The horse is a great table  
that holds and carries us over the land, selflessly.

Mark Irwin

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