

Poem for a Beautiful Woman

If the full moons I remember
were white stones, I'd build an arch
out in the dark. You could add a stone
whenever you walked through. The best place
would be a eucalyptus grove,
aromatic in soft rain.

I haven't seen a eucalyptus tree
for years, but today the ponderosa
needles shone transparent and surreal.
Sunlight broke over a steep slope, the day
flowed clear inside your head, and we were
open as the easy afternoon.

Spring clouds blow clean and blue, shaped strange
like green leaves of flowers you've forgotten.
all winter I lived alone with wind
in twisted limbs and broken stones. My face
went stiff, a mask of bone. I was cold
as that bird we found frozen on a ledge.

Waxwings are magic birds, I watch for them
in a white aspen grove, the sun striking
smooth bark. The voices come first, a ripple
of sound inside their flight. The whole flock
circles to a tall jackpine, green in a
spiral of illuminated wings.

Beneath these bare Missoula hills I feel
some animal stir, turn hip and shoulder
into grass. From underground a warm song
thaws my spine. I wear red sleeves, we dance
all night. Would you believe I dreamed your face
blue in moonlight by the river?

It doesn't matter, you're like the clamor
of a thousand swans rising off a swamp.
Your skin makes me strong and wild
in this crazy rain. I'd like to give you
the finest parts of my body.
Take this poem.

Matthew Hansen