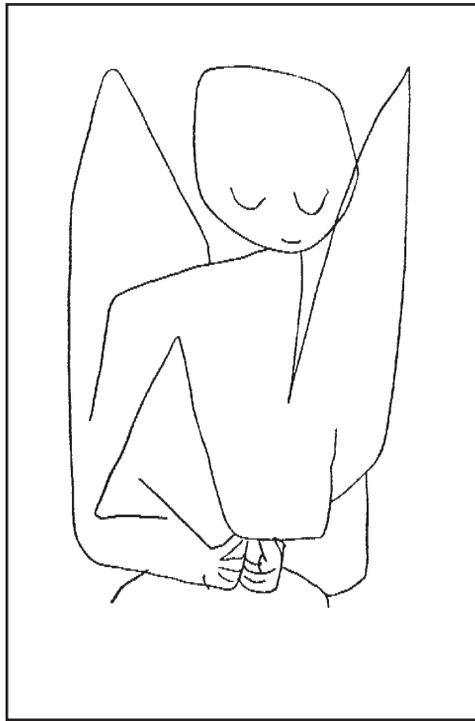


A Small Book on Wonder



*Selected from the Pages of
Poetry East
Edited by Richard Jones*

W O N D E R

“Everything can be explained scientifically today,
except Art.”

—Pablo Picasso

The Moon

The moon can be taken in spoonfuls
or as a capsule every two hours.
It is as good as hypnotism and soothes
and also lightens
those intoxicated with philosophy.
A piece of the moon in the pocket
is a better amulet than a rabbit's foot:
It helps those in love to meet,
to be rich without anyone knowing it
and to be distant from doctors and clinics.
It can be dessert for children
when they can't sleep,
and some drops of moon in the eyes of the old
help them die happily.
Put a tender leaf of the moon
beneath your pillow
and you might see what you want to see.
Always fill a flask of moon air
for when you are smothering,
and give the key to the moon
to prisoners and the disenchanting.
For those condemned to death
and for those condemned to life
there is no better stimulant in precise
and controlled doses than the moon.

Optimistic Man

as a child he never plucked the wings off flies
he didn't tie tin cans to cats' tails
or imprison beetles in matchboxes
or destroy anthills
he grew up
and all these things were done to him
I was at his bedside when he died
he said read me a poem
about the sun and the sea
about nuclear reactors and satellites
about the greatness of humanity

Grace on Sunday

Passing down this street, we pass
as if through stained glass: the lights
of this air. Here is grace, undeserved,
but ours now, all hours
after church or lunch or love or sleep
when light comes resplendent,
the sun spreading wide, the street aglow
with people out strolling,
babies in carriages, dogs on leashes,
taking on new colors, the brightness of going,
of presences passing, passing this way
down blocks of amazement and into radiance,
passing into radiance always.

Horace Mann Elementary

The star charts,
celestial navigation,
I understand nothing.

Hug the moon and smile
like a virgin. The plans
of the universe
are like smoke.

I wind up in places
that just seem to underline
the nature of solitude.

Mrs. Green rapped
my head
as if it were
an astronaut's helmet.

I wish I could have sent a robot
to school instead of me.
In the space suit of my body,
I resisted whatever it was they were.

Do What You Have To

Why talk now of that day
when the heart will be broken into pieces
and all sorrows will be wiped out-
what has been found will be lost
and what has not been attained
will be attained.

This is really the first day of love
for which we have always yearned
and of which we were always afraid.
This day has been hundreds of times:
planted and then destroyed,
plundered and then recompensed.

Why worry now about that day
when the heart will be broken into pieces
and all sorrows will be wiped out.
Rid yourself of all doubts and fears.

What will come will come.
If there is laughter, we will laugh.
If there is weeping, we will weep ..
Do what you have to
and let the future take care of itself.

Etch a Sketch

So many twisted blueprints:
skyscrapers, fences, chimneys.
You can lose yourself in a gray
maze that vanishes with a shake.

What a wonder in old times,
the red box with white knobs.
Twist one to scratch a line
horizontal; the other, vertical.

Curves are imponderable: the knobs
allow sideways or up and down,
but not around. So no room for
a moon, a breast, a smile.

The Age of the Great Liners

—*after Jacobsen*

The age of the great liners is over now.
Titanic, Britannia: They lie
On the bottom like broken cathedrals.
But imagine how beautiful they were:
Gleaming starlobes, chandeliers,
Staircases winding into blinding light.
5, 6 stories tall, they loomed
Before us like bright cities.
Lusitania, Andrea Doria:
On the last day they will rise
And take their place in the night sky.
The dead will peer from their staterooms
Into the stellar dark.
And we who call ourselves survivors
Will stare into their vast
Stories of light,
The earth made buoyant by their passing.

Contributors

Jaime Sabines
“The Moon”

Translated from the Spanish

by Robert Jebb

Nazim Hikmet
“Optimistic Man”

Translated from the Turkish

by Randy Blasing & Mutlu Konuk

Jack Anderson
“Grace on Sunday”

Rustin Larson
“Horace Mann Elementary”

Faiz Ahmed Faiz
“Do What You Have To”

Translated from the Urdu

by Daud Kamel

Michael McCarthy
“Etch a Sketch”

Robert Hedin
“The Age of the Great Liners”

*At Poetry East,
we believe in words. We
believe poetry is the highest
art. A poem clarifies our deep
humanity, though its grace remains
a mystery. Poems illuminate the world
we live in—a slow dance in the kitchen,
birds in flight, a loved one's death, silence
in an empty room. As you read these
seven poems, we hope you will read
with fresh eyes and full hearts. Poetry
opens a door, inviting you into its
home. Here, come a little closer,
these are for you.*

Artistic Director: A.M. Prentice

