

Speed of Words

Unlocalised, without dimension,
and instantaneously and at once
photon and cosmos.
But at speed of words nothing happens.
The helpless, shining sun does not illuminate.
Therefore, cloths have been set out,
and leaves crowded into rustling tenements;
therefore, great magnets of meaning are made to bend
the abstract angels into being.
And see, light returns the greetings of trees,
and, at the height of any flagpole, breaks
into speech.

The Runners

Here or there hundreds of them, phantom-like,
bobbing in place at street corners, then
lifting their knees suddenly and leaping
into the densest, loudest traffic
(of briefest of trajectories, of shortest views),
in transit yet at ease, breathing, loping,
like bearers of distance and pure direction,
darting half-naked out of nowhere and
where, where in the world are they running to?
swift and solitary, silent beings
who, should you now step into the path,
have dodged away, or, if you raise a hand
to stay them or speak, immediately

are gone: who are these runners who create
 in their gliding such fine, singular spaces
 among the street's vociferous jargons?
 —as if each one were a still, wordless message
 or question one would answer if one could grasp it,
 this one, that one, sliding past, going away,
 while you stand there, your hand raised to no purpose,
 your hidden heart rejoicing that the quick heel
 won't soon, won't ever, be overtaken,
 although you, as you have longed to, suddenly
 disburden yourself and follow follow.

West Street

Exotic birds of passage, errant bits
 of bright nights dropped from heaven to hop
 here—in party hairdos at all hours,
 in hotpants and minis, and black or white
 vinyl half-waders even the wily trout
 and wary bass shall find alluring, sexy...

might be models shooting on location
 in some slummy industrial setting,
 sucking in their cheeks and mugging funky
 goofy moody naughty haughty pampered
 —one of them now holding half a jelly bun
 and slowly eating, then throwing it down...

but these early birds of six and seven,
 out to catch the early worms,
 are half a dozen hookers working from
 a West Street warehouse loading dock
 —runaways with razors in the purse,
 the missing girls next-door come down

from miserable highs and home to roost.

Testing the Waters

Daylong and then in dreams this testing
the waters—how swift, sweet, thick the course
of things, how cool, consistent, various,
and what the current bears, or bypasses—
so that we can go on and on in the swim
and still be staunch and other than this flowing:
not carried away, not left behind.