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There Are Many Things That Please Me

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THOMAS LUX is 27 years old, and currently teaches poetry workshops at Columbia College in Chicago. His poems have appeared in *Field, New American Review*, and many other magazines. His first book, *Memory’s Handgrenade*, was published in 1972 by Pym-Randall Press.

THERE ARE MANY THINGS THAT PLEASE ME

The loam and lungs of dreams
to begin with. Certainly
those sailboats drifting across
your thighs please me. I’m pleased
with the courage of the surgeon
who performs open heart surgery
on a mosquito and I’m so pleased
I can hardly describe the courage
of the mosquito. I’m pleased
that ice is finally beginning to lose.
I’m pleased, very pleased,
with the lizards and fish
and whoever else taught us
this language. Nothing pleases me more
than not having my tongue
drawn back in terror. I’m even pleased
with my strength: I can lift
these gray aspirin to my lips,
I can tear this match from a matchbook.
I’m pleased we can say to our children:
It’s almost time to sing! All
these things please me, so many
things please me. I’m pleased
in the evening when I lower
the shade and what looks like the last
snowflake in the world
doesn’t float by. . . . But most of all
I’m pleased with myself, pleased
with myself in the same way
I’d be pleased with a man
who carries with him a sack
of disdain, a somewhat silver
disdain, nevertheless a disdain, and
who is beginning to spill it,
spill it in the same way the sun
climbs a hill early in the morning:
gradually, with a determined heat, leaf
by leaf and branch over branch.

LONGITUDE AND LATITUDE: HART CRANE

If we knew the exact
longitude and latitude
of the Orizaba the moment
Hart jumped from the bow
we could go there
and still find in the air
the delicate curve
his body made. It’s there,
you’ve got to believe me!
And Hart’s still around,
probably smooth and calm
in some current travelling
the Gulf Stream, or else
swimming occasionally up
river into America,
close to the banks, close,
close.