

1977

Winter Windows

Milton Kessler

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sentences, lifting a pickle or a sliver of turkey,
nibbling a little with unconscious pleasure. And
she imagined setting it out artfully, the white meat,
the brioche, antipasto, the mushrooms and salad
arranged down the oak counter cleanly
and how they all came as in a dance
when she called them. She carved meat
and then she was crying. Then she was in darkness
crying. She didn't know what she wanted.

Winter Windows / Milton Kessler

1

By that playful red trim
on the farmhouse gleaming
as you drive at dusk

you know that happiness
was possible then
and even once again.

2

Grandfather, it was not for us
to be a hunter or drunkard.
Proud of the pain of the waterpails
I walked beside you from the well.

3

A little ice
above the living room lamp
steam and hiss of the kitchen iron
practicing buttonholes all day
we've come to value
this emptiness.

4

Like cottage curtains
like teeth and sky
your belly moves under me
over and over in my fallow night.

And when the new women said
“come in,” I said “no.”
Now where do I go?

5

Same cars under snow
at the great window.

Temperate Zone / Peter Wild

In summer the lizards nose down our chimney
from the heat toward the music of our language.
but inside they run around the tile, lacking traction
like Indians from the bush crazed on city streets
that you see in Mexico.
we spy them, a medallion spread on the wall
pausing in its journey, doing push-ups
on the couch while we're on the telephone,
tangled in the aerial roots
of the colocasia looking for insects. watering,
my wife shrieks, and the St. Bernard, eyes going big,
pursues her barefoot, hands out running
after it around the house. from the corner
she says This one's a prince with
a speckled coat, or This one's lost a leg
in an accident, as I reach for a broom,
an axe. finally we get them steered
toward the light of the open door,
or cupped, a candle gone limp in the hand
thrown out. on the porch released