

1977

Temperate Zone

Peter Wild

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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?

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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

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from their dreams of the tomb they come to life again
with all their senses, sailing past
the cats waiting paws lifted in the bushes straight
for the nearest cloud stuttering by. arm in arm
on the top step we watch them clinging
with their thin transparent fingers behind
the billboard moving on to other kingdoms.

Without Glasses / Michael North

Without glasses I look
at a primitive world
where the animals are more
beautiful than Lascaux.
Cows billow as they amble
through the trees. Dogs
go soft at the edges
and mold themselves
to the fence. On every
branch is a small bird,
pulsing like a flame.

This is the original world,
where the deer grew so
tall they toppled, dragging
their complicated racks.
Here the new teeth of
the cats distorted their
jowls, and mammoths
bowed to the majesty
of their own mouths.

This is the world in
flux, where color is so
insistent it can't be
contained by any line.
With nothing to stop it
the tail of the flycatcher