

1977

# Landscape with a Woman

Richard Shelton

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stretches forever. The heron  
erects a long body,  
standing to see, and  
the blue whale tests  
the ocean and finds no  
limit to its buoyancy.

In this true world the jay  
blurs itself in flight;  
the wind blots the sharpness  
of the pine. The artist,  
pausing at the wall, finds  
his shapes already leaning,  
the long wolves stretched  
by the tension of the chase,  
the great square ox expanding,  
fleeing on its spindly  
legs, acquiring by its  
speed the body of fright.

## Landscape with a Woman / Richard Shelton

when shadows climb  
out of the desert  
up the sides of mountains  
and violent birds pass like projectiles  
on their way home for the night  
I say I have given you  
everything it was all I had

when darkness rises  
to the tops of saguaros  
and a river of cool air begins to flow  
down the arroyo  
I say I have given you  
little it was all I had

when the moon  
sits on top of the Santa Ritas  
then levitates becoming smaller  
and more pale as it goes  
I say I have given you  
nothing it was all I had

but you do not listen you go on  
into your losses without birds  
without mountains or shadows  
or the moon you look into yourself  
and say it is not enough  
it was never enough

## New House / Diane Ackerman

We bought a house hand-me-down  
and complete, packed with all the gear  
family life engenders: cameras,  
clothing, junk and antiques,  
vibrator, bowling ball, pans and glasses.

Every knick-knack knows gossip  
I have no right to, about a Mr. Norton  
who lived, bred, and boozed there.  
I'm told he died of gluttony  
in middle age, towards the end

bloating like a pufferfish.  
Now suddenly I've acquired  
someone's life, as if it were a fondue-pot  
or a hedge-cutter. His initial  
still rules the hall linoleum.

There are mortgages and taxes  
and a pool to skim daily,  
poison-ivy to uproot, grass to mow,  
doors to lock. And me  
with no steady job guaranteed.