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How Is This Done? · Jim Gauer

Birds begin by changing sizes. Don’t be alarmed. The deep structure of a flying bird is empty space, asking itself what size. And then a man on a bench with his eyes closed holding out his arms This Size, This Size, while birds settled deep in their emptiness echo his answer, filling the shallow air with This-Sized birds. Isn’t that how a man tells his emptiness how large it is, by the space in his arms? of course it is. And other things are a form of how also, how did they build this becoming concrete and machinery, how did we get here turning itself into buses and automobiles, how did the fire start transforming the city sky into shy towers that cause their own solitude, beginning each answer with the words fire alarm.

And then these people halted in the flagrant street, the obvious answer to a brief and standing question their existence must pose: how is this done? how is it the city as it is buries them in shadows, feet first in a crosswalk, dying to ask themselves into being as they stand there, heads bowed, arms crossed, bodies bent deep into question marks they answer as they are: how do i do this? how do i do this now? the deep structure of a walking man is an unmoving shadow, asking itself how. and then a man on a bench with his eyes open pointing with his arms say how, say how, while birds and beasts and wonderful children start up from the standstill of all moving things, and a fire settles back to dance in answer, flames holding close the shadows they cast of themselves.