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Carter Revard

UNZIPPING ANGELS

[Words are the Daughters of Men; Things are the Sons of Heaven.—Samuel Johnson]

[When Adam asked Raphael about it, he answered

. . . with a smile that glowed

Celestial rosy red, love's proper hue,

"Let it suffice thee that thou know'st

Us happy, and without love no happiness.

Easier than air with air, if spirits embrace,

Total they mix, union of pure with pure

Desiring; nor restrained conveyance need

As flesh to mix with flesh, or soul with soul."

—Paradise Lost 8.618-29]

Angels don't look
through human eyes—
they see
us all at once, voyaging timeless and
capsuled in dream they taste
on the baby's lips the
dying President's blood;
their Möbius strip of synæsthesia pulls
up sticky from the tomb of THERE
the phoenix-nest of HERE, and from their gummy
fragments recongregates those glorious
sunsets of 1883 into the surf-
fringed mountain peak of Krakatoa even
while watching this universe start up and
end like a beating heart. And yet—
and yet—
CAN they know people,
know TIME as we do, bear
our mortal awareness,

our carnal knowledge? When,
for instance, the Sons of God looked
upon the Daughters of Men
and found them fair,
how far into such deep
blue eyes could they
descend? Was it
at first like
leaving behind the curving arms
of a galaxy for
one blue star expanding heartwise into
the white-marbled swirl of weather,
then down, down into bronze, into
bluegreen ocean and desert, only
to land in a
parking lot, empty, with
shopping carts
winging in gusts of wind
on a closed Sabbath?
Or was it deep-illusioning,
like moth-wings touching
her eyelids, the irised curtains open and
they taste
their mintlike minds,
papaya senses,
feelings like milk and
honey, hot wholewheat
caritas? What being burns through both as
star-myriads enter turning
the skin of space away in
flares of shining
ungraves, her hips
rising weightless poised as
in 3-D sliding above
white crinkle of Everest,
deep
blue

shimmer of being in
time growing small,
blue point in darkness dropping
on a dark cry into
unself where they move,
on starry rapids riding down
deep swells like dolphins through
white foam and all
of time a graceful curving as
of dolphins in the deep
surges of dancing gently upon
the pointless point of
their heavenly joy.

A SUN DANCE STORY

For Indians, Water Boy's
a good and honored job, being chosen
to serve the singers and the dancers
at any powwow means this person
is someone learning, being taught
by bringing water how we are—mostly
it's younger people who do this, that's
why Cousin Buck's story means
even more to us, the man
who gave him water wasn't young.
He was hitchhiking there in Kansas—going up
from Oklahoma to South Dakota,
his car broke down, less
than halfway from White Eagle
to the Sun Dance at Crow Dog's Paradise he
was out there in a parched July day on
a Kansas back road where
the meadowlarks were panting more
than singing where they perched
on the humming