

Winter 2013

# Tightrope Walker

Aleš Debeljak

Follow this and additional works at: <http://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

## Recommended Citation

Debeljak, Aleš. "Tightrope Walker." *The Iowa Review* 43.3 (2013): 168-168. Web.  
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.7364>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact [lib-ir@uiowa.edu](mailto:lib-ir@uiowa.edu).

ALEŠ DEBELJAK

*Translated from the Slovenian by Brian Henry*

## TIGHTROPE WALKER

*For Igor Zabel (1958–2005)*

Watch the dawn and the embrace, watch the wrong diagnosis, watch  
the friction of the rope, monks tied it to a lightning rod,  
taut, it hums between the gilded cupola and the study.  
At the modern gallery the light is on and a curator works for unknown

clients. He draws maps for artists who refuse to  
get stuck in their apartment buildings, plans for levitation  
and other repetitions of first steps, tentacles and silk  
slippers, much exercise in patience and growing insight.

168

A few of us walk a thin rope and it is merciful  
that we keep something in the glass without spilling,  
masters of modern air currents and critics of emptiness,  
we monitor ourselves on screens the color of a squeezed tangerine,

our styles of balancing differ, but our obsession is the same:  
to reach the other side, touch the blade, and return.  
Watch the uncertain hand here and the temporary shelter there,  
the blazing light of the east, a catalog without the last page.