1998

Unzipping Angels

Carter Revard

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

Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation

Available at: https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.4960
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

\[ \ldots \text{with a smile that glowed} \]

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 Møebius 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