

The Three Travelers

When Abraham and Sarah sheltered
Three angels, they received an enviable gift.
“Am I not too old?” Sarah asked laughing
When the angels promised that her barren womb
Would quicken and even though an old lady,
She would bring forth a child to brighten her declining years.
Her time for maternity had not passed
Irrevocably. “And to quicken your faith, your son will be known
For the laughter he brings you and others!”
The angels said as they touched her,

One hand on her heart,
A second on her lips,
The third inside her thigh.
Her child was to be the joker, the teaser, a tickle always
Returning her to angelic caresses.

“From his laughter, your progeny
Will flow as the stars in the heavens. You will become as
The grains of sand on a beach. A Child’s laugh will be a reminder.”

The blood keeps calling forth hope,
Though the spirit refuses to define what that hope might be for,
And the brain cannot make the calculation, but
Hope keeps pumping as regularly as the heart’s juice,
A constant rejoicing that we must define through the elaboration
Of stone and timber and glass, a construct of uses
Criss-crossing the terrain, reminders of the shelter that once
Evoked angelic blessing

—but the spirit says no, not quite this.

Hope leads back to the soft caress received from three angels
Mimicked in the need for bodies to cradle in each other,
Breathing quietly, kissing whatever appears before the lips,
Neck, cheek, chest, arm, a soft pelting of skin falling
Towards an open mouth as it dissolves into another piece of flesh

—but the spirit says no, closer but not this.

And if we multiply we must have purpose.
We seek out activity to justify our being:
Adventure, war, work, muscular exertion, a search for
Life-long vocations in which time is always slipping away

—and still the spirit says no, no, no

In the end you are left alone
Hoping for the kiss of an angel to shelter you
When your body can no longer bear the cost of your search.
Hope has built a cache of things providing for every satisfaction
Except the one you crave the most. Still each generation adds
To an ever-growing mass of things piling up on the land

—though the spirit keeps saying no, not yet, not here, not this, try
again.

Yes, a promise was made, but if you parse the words
You shall become as the grains of sand on a beach,
You, a single human being, are just one particle
Whose only power is the potential for irritation.

If you slipped inside the feathers of an angel's wings,
And they flapped to eject you,
A gale might blow.

Particles of sand and pollen and the ashes of the dead
Rise in thin sparkling strands,
Whirling multicolored specks, ascending to the heavens,
Ascending in search of God.

He sleeps in His bed, soft in the furry hide of dreams.
He belongs to no one, He knows no one.
We surround and batter Him hoping for a kiss, but He is no angel.
He is love's shadow.

Three travelers insisted, Be fruitful and multiply.
What if we were to say, let us stop where we are, let us discover
This history we have been too busy living through to remember,
swinging from moment to moment like monkeys
Racing through the jungle escaping the shadow of a predator.