

## LISA SHATZKY

### Where the Poem Comes From

Cracks, schisms, broken  
rocks that chafe your hands and make them  
bleed. The black crevice  
you keep falling  
into again and again not because  
you didn't see it (as you once claimed)  
but because it's there and smells  
of gutrot and earth shit and  
you know something alive  
is still inside, some lost spark  
from a falling star  
you must retrieve  
but more often than not  
you come back up with  
a fistful of dead bones.  
Light under the door.  
Rain against the cabin windows.  
Elongated moments you wrap yourself in  
to deny the outstretched arms of night.  
Autumn's first leaves drenched in gold.  
Unfinished conversations.  
Arguments with yourself  
that you never win.  
Pain so unbearable you forget  
to breathe.  
Love so unbearable you forget  
to breathe.  
New snow.  
Engorged lips grasping the nipple.  
Cat's coughed up furball.  
The cow's eyes  
on the way to the slaughterhouse.  
Groceries left in the rain.  
Phone calls from the debt collector  
you don't return.  
Moonrise after summer thunder  
dancing on the bedroom floor.  
Early morning  
when you first wake up  
and don't know what day it is  
there's only light  
and anything is possible  
until you spill coffee on your white shirt  
as you jump back into the fray.

*Lisa Shatzky's poetry appears earlier in this volume.*

## PATIENCE WHEATLEY

### Poets are Odd

A psychiatrist divines  
that Poets are odd.

All writers, he says,  
are odd  
have more emotional and  
mental problems  
than other people.

But poets  
aren't as bad  
as some of the others:  
fewer depressions  
less unstable

Can it be the healing  
of metaphor  
the vistas opened by  
simile  
the depths plumbed by  
the sound of  
rhythm, or dare I say it,  
rhyme?

Perhaps poetry  
puts truth  
in blinding light

allowing no denial

but offering  
solace of comparison.

*Patience Wheatley's poetry appears  
earlier in this volume.*