

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.*