

# Fierce Elegy

Peter Gizzi



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## *Fierce Elegy*



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for Suzanna Tamminen

*all these years*



*Only in connection with a body  
does a shadow make sense.*

ROSMARIE WALDROP



# *Fierce Elegy*



# Findspot Unknown

Thus far we have spoken  
only the codes,  
a litany of survival.  
Thus spoke the silvered asphodel  
next to the factory ruin.  
Sound carries on water.  
My subject is the wind.  
To take umbrage at what a tree can do,  
watching one single birch  
become lightning stunning the sky.  
Landscape is a made thing,  
to see the mind seeing itself.  
To see thought, a wing  
in night, the long brooding.  
Take it, listen, the night is orchestral  
when the power's on.  
Everything disporting.  
A furred wand upon nothingness.



I get it, it was good to leave the world,  
to find myself in thou.

There's a lot to be said  
for seeing in the dark,  
and more to the light  
when there's nothing to see.

If I write about the moon,  
it's because it's there.

I am landlocked, surrounded  
by rivers and lakes, pills and leaves.

I saw a better life, it was far off,  
sun on moss next to a friend,  
the softening air, the dandelion fluff.

It was kinda real, and kinda not.  
Can't see it today.

And out of nothing, breath.  
A beast-like shadow in the glass.  
If I brought back every feeling I had  
where would I put them,  
what could they mean  
to this world on the floor?

It was best to let the moon unravel  
and focus the truth of the music.  
It was best to let the music  
unravel and focus the truth of night.  
Like when I found you  
in the back of my mind.  
I am talking about people  
and the night.  
People inside the night.  
The night and what we are made of.  
The things and the people.  
The signal and its noise.

## I'm Good to Ghost

It was all so Orfeo  
the other night.  
When the face you carry  
is not your own  
and the history in this  
is a history of  
haunted ground.  
The world is a veil.  
Its effects total  
the imagination.  
What have I been doing  
without me  
all this time?  
Don't know if  
I want to anymore.  
I wonder distance  
and its discontents.  
I trouble distance  
nevertheless.

The poet is abuzz.  
The poet becomes  
a bug in air.  
How did I lose you  
between the rug  
on my floor and  
the sun setting  
out the window,  
between the radiator  
and a dusky  
kaleidoscopic light?  
To wander that light  
ingenious before dark.  
To wonder the beautiful  
so close to death.  
Where do you go  
when I don't see you?  
Or who am I when  
you're not around?

## Revisionary

I've decided to let my inner weather out.  
Even in the nerves flashing, some things  
are only shadow.

What's up with that?

My muse bruises me.

Some days I sit hours to be relieved  
by a word.

Today's word is invisible.

I'm putting trouble into place, turning  
toward what is.

Listening to stone translate into silence.

Here is an old rock covered with lichen  
in the mossy forest inside the self.

I like it here when it's green.

This is me evolving.

I'm hanging on. A whisper.

Certain prayers are tied to this ribbon.

How in hell can nature throw clay into art  
    into a speaking being into air.  
I saw a world that was an afternoon.  
This cloud in my hand.  
Sky pouring into sky reflecting the absolute  
    of the lake.  
The flock and its tangle of shadow.

Nearing the end, I could hear a lark.  
Its trill fixing itself to my brain.  
It seemed a thing becoming a wave.  
A thing dissolving into the world  
    as I found it.  
Illegible. Agrammatical.  
To parse the velocity of trusses and stars  
    flowering here at the edge.  
Calling me.

## Dissociadelic

To be a desperate player  
in the invisible world.  
This is something different.  
To have crossed over into ink  
and to loiter and bleed out  
on the occasion of the universe.  
I've learned this.  
My spirit broke long ago  
so I won't be broken.  
This is something quite different  
inside the song.  
Blurs. Gestures. Something loved.  
Come as you are, collapsing  
and thriving with endings  
like beginnings.  
When 8 Ball says "ask again."  
When the day reveals  
the prismatic systems of loss,

a blinding shimmer  
on new blacktop in a sun shower.  
Everything always in black.  
Black wax. Black dress. Black hole.  
Whatever.  
When you're brought to your knees,  
sing a song of praise.  
When you're gutted,  
embrace the whorl. FTW.  
There's nothing like it.



## Creeley Song

all that is lovely  
in words, even  
if gone to pieces  
all that is lovely  
gone, all of it  
for love and  
autobiography  
as if I were  
writing this  
hello, listen  
the plan is  
the body and  
all of it for love  
now in pieces

all that is lovely  
echoes still  
in life & death  
still memory  
gardens open  
onto windows  
lovely, the charm  
that mirrors  
all that was, all  
that is, lovely  
in a song