

Lucidity

for Jan & Ray Brooks

Because there is nothing more sacred
than the space between two words:
translucent leaves
or the space between two visions:
luminous leaves leaden sky
they lie against each other. We fall between.
Like the space we fall into
between us.

It's early spring. We lie in our bed,
you telling me the story you are. I hear
your words stumble and flow
like the rain trailing the glass—
in the window above us the
maple's new leaves gray sky
is enough to light them.

Because we are creating a new language
words to bridge the distance between
your back's curve our vociferous sheets,
because the current, the spaces, the relation
of the words are the gap between them.

Because we can talk all we want now
our messages are opened
by silence between.

Because the
leaden sky, the
leavened bread of our bed
full of the dusk of us sleeping
beside each other
silent speaking too much.

Because I woke before you,
heard a word from your sleep, and I turned to you,
your back, your shoulder blades

translucent leaves
in the first early light of morning.
We've fallen into a whole new world
blessed by this
green clarity weighted sky.

Mairie at the Noon Hour (at 35)

Jamie bursts in rings his keys on the tin tray on
the sidetable & the kids chortle around him like
birds lunch is late as the morning skipped by me
like daughter Ellen's feet scuffing the chalk-lined
hopscotch by the garden gate I unearth tins of
soup buried against just such a day & rescued
thereby I heat crackers to take the staleness out
& Jamie nuzzles my neck as Ben drags from his
arm like a fishing weight *there* I ladle the soup into
bowls on the table tear garden basil to wake it up
& its scent prickles me aware here's Jamie Ellen
Ben for this moment here & bright all circled
smiling in the window's lemon light in the soup's
steam in the kitchen's warm bonds I can *see* them
remember each murmuring in their sleep I know
them how the herb's green life stains my fingers

Beneath the Sign Marked *Maidens* >9

my mother and I stubbornly face north the
sign points south we pose and grin Dad doesn't
get it then snaps us frozen into time there
m a i d e n w i f e c r o n e
I am Janus facing the future constructing myself
while I still suffer the girl I was the maiden the
young woman writing my life from the middle
here I remember the *truth* of days past walking
the beach with my father with my friends with my
husband picking up shells for their stinking weight
their wicked beauty so flawless they must be *made*
so perfect no one could devise such a treasure
unearthed with my sharp eyes with my nimble
hands with my hazed eyes with my twigged hands
she dares to step into the tide to delve for them
deeper, I dare to step into the tide old woman you
dare to step into the tide you let me create you

LUCIDITY

Neile Graham



A sampler of poems from
Blood Memory
BuschekBooks, 2000

Neile Graham is a poet worth watching
and reading...a poet of technical polish, lit-
erary skill and much personal intensity.

—Event



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Paper Rock Scissors Stone Water Air

Stone Water Air

I want to leave you but
you're sleeping so peacefully lashes
hit your cheek
just like the baby I imagine you were
skin luminous and
breaking with light
the fiery tone of muted
birth done in by
time
hour by hour grating
against your dreaming
that which is your self
pictured against flesh
you like this you're not
quite human yet
if that's why I'm going
with all this rawness
to burn me the reason and
route for leaving the
tale of us behind
if you turn it becomes
the tale of us together
for the first time and
I can't have that
I've gone to search the
world for bits of stone and the light
that's what I'll tell you

Paper Rock Scissors

wait the world holds water
they say it's water that will
save us the earth is
a perpetual motion machine
fueled by water and
where there is no water by
wind and what it makes of water's absence
sand I can almost feel the drop of
grit in my palm each tiny
grain against the fat
lush fall of rain it overwhelms
those desert seeds they swim
till I add more and they swallow
the water whole like some creature
starving for air they'll wonder
why I say this why I need
to trouble them with this story
why it's all just another
round of paper covers rock breaks
scissors cuts paper
sand wears the stone and
scissors down till they join
water dissolves the paper
while the rain is lost in dunes
dunes lost in sea and the
astonishment of the skin of my palm
open and waiting yes I can wait



Ravenous

how she leaves the house starving
for wind that thrusts the clouds
across lean sky the grasses
that snarl around her
as she waits beneath leaves
and light the sun pours on her skin—

how she surges into
his red car breath fervent
as ghosts caught by her thirst
at the drift of his hair in his eyes,
the fever on her flesh
before he touches her—

how she yanks herself
into the self she makes
as she burns in her need to be fire
the passion to tear her throat
with her singing, to swallow
the world as it rings with glory—

how the pang in her belly twists
through her as his mouth leaves
her breasts as he stretches above
her, wet with her his hands
plant at her sides in the sharp hollow moment
before he eases himself into her there—

how the great empty ache of her
watches alone in the park
as a boy learns to feed ducks
as a girl somersaults herself
down the rise as a toddler learns
the ground beneath her feet—

how she watches the years behind her
trembling there as though
they could spill over her again
as if she could catch one and know
its flavour again through
simple singular desire—

how she still feels each
wrench in her gut
thundering for life breath
how she could eat the world alive—
meaning how I could—
and how we would hunger still

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