



20 June

Astri Kleppe

*Tonight they all spring into blossom, Lilacs,
Bird Cherry
with strands of willow, weaving
their way to the beginning;
How it all
was meant to be.*

*Birdsong, sound of running steps,
of tea and cups;
Soon the larvae will be heading
for the bird cherry, enfolding it
in silvery cocoons;
and soon
warm nights of August will bring
darkness, for Orion
to be seen.
But in this night of early June
it's all in ecstasy, in vigil
for the blossom;
No one sleeps, the birds, the flies
are all awake.*

*Who are you then, I asked
the Lilacs
We are strangers here, the answer came,
and we belong to no one
But tell me who you are, I begged
And flower clusters sprinkled over me,
a waterfall
of petals,
We just arrived, tonight,
what more is there to say?*

II

*A loose dream from a corner of the universe
 is driving towards us, our island;
 Clouds
 awakening of granite and cadavers, blue
 and earth;
 A boomerang towards The Milky Way, its icy stars
 and howling wolves, and tightly curved
 around the little heat
 from our own speed. We are but animals
 of auguries, of hope and salt;
 and though great dreams
 of Leibniz,
 Alan Guth and Hubble led us,
 it was other tokens
 that the Universe imagined,
 of another
 kind;
 And suddenly this otherness
 sticks out: a tree
 With roots in galaxies and whispers,
 in galactic summer, leaves
 that dance in morning breeze
 and drizzle, with a scent
 of seed and clover, pregnant
 visions,
 over paths through rain-gray
 grass.*

*Beware of those
 who tread on dew and stop
 under that tree. So slowly
 night is turning, in this space
 of the improbable, a darkness
 where a tree can grow
 from nothing, rise
 with flower buds and day.*

*It was in June, an early morning
 in a sea before the blue
 of skies, before all grass and oxygen;
 but still a sea,
 a meadow, all its flowers.*

III

*They gave us this, a place
so wonderful,
our garden with its tender plants
and trees of darkest mold
with branches stretching out
to heaven, all the blue.*

*And over time we built
our house,
with kitchen windows with a view
of oaks, and in the winter nights
the dog lay by the oven.
And from stone and dust and clay
we built our roads, from sand
and metal
the first street light, zippers
and TV.
The dogs got leashes, we got
blogs, so marvelous
our garden, and so tall
the skyscrapers;
In street dust and the growing noise
we saw the progress, in the dying trees
the halved diversity
of everything.*

*Do you remember all these woods? So vast
and wild, the rugged mountains
roaring over trees and oceans.
O, the ocean! Waving waves
around the boat, like fingers
through a golden field, the time
when the first crops
were grown.
This was our Earth, with seas
and meadows, timothy,
all life born within this triangle
where ice and clouds meet seas
and rivers.
It was ours.
We had all this,
the grass, the water, sky
and clouds.
Our garden
was complete.*

IV

*The elements are four, they said, it's
Fire, Earth and Air
and Water.*

*Air is made of eyes, the Earth is
made of red
and green, and Water
shapes our dreams.*

*Only Fire, that's the Sun, is still
unstained. No smog
is registered
in solar atmospheres, no drought,
no poison or depletion of the soil.
Fire alone
is pure.
It burns, it is;
It shall not want.*

*Three things, they said to me,
are good things.
Four is still OK, and five is not
so bad, but six
is already too much, and seven
is pure waste.
But seven, I protested, is a lovely
number, seven
good things is far more
than three.
Three or seven, never mind, they said.
Our only worry
is when letters are forgotten
or when too many
are added;*

*And in the early morning
flocks of black deer
ran beneath us, dark clouds
of pure music
on the newgrown grass.*