

Bad Romantic Poet

the hermitage was pressed by blasts of air
against the mountain

scored by salt
the bells
tolled back the ocean tides at intervals
and kept the planet spinning

while up above the river
brilliant yellow slugs and moss
bloomed against the underside of memory
and rocks

later I would sit beside the relics
chanting Latin hymns

I didn't understand
afraid to risk
what others thought of me
the silent brothers singing to the end

and when the fog would settle down on us for days
I would sit
in my cell transcribing calligraphic visions
soup and bread appearing at my door –

without a key
I worked for hours
on my oceanic dreams

my body
worn down from years of drinking
wanted only rest

the offices were only
broken indices of a backward-spinning planet

I would like to say I trusted
I would like to say I understood

yet it was only when I hiked beyond the river
beyond the hours and ocean
that I began to understand
my proper time and place

2.

the sound condemned to be in doubt
in constant repetition
blown down from the highest limbs / spiriting through the woods
one day the barest branches barely budding / the next a bloom and bush extravaganza
impossible for city boys to find their way home

space is gone / soul is gone / how is it that you did not understand?

the bad romantic poet believes that he is the wounded sky
so quick to take on feeling
to take on color in the face

God, how close the colors to his countenance
the haptic steps / the terror when neither his dog
nor the world would not respond to his entreaties

and look / the mother goose / tyrannical and paranoid
her goslings / knowing only love
are candidates for envy
her juttred neck / extended tongue / she's ready for the crucifix
her own traumatic fear gleams
in her cold black eyes

oh bad romantic poet –
the animal you saw in the pond by your apartment
could not have been a beaver, which are not in this part of Michigan

but look – two timid turtles on a rock
and later / over coffee / you can study philosophical treatises
on the effects of continued trauma
on children and on geese