

the  
uncorrected  
*eye*

Harry Bauld

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## Woodpecker

To dig an inch he bangs  
with everything he's got, bug-zaps  
the stump's glut with barbed tongue

and publishes no canticle or caw,  
only a paradiddle of discovery, dead tock  
among the limbs. Backporch

suet's his junket in Fat City,  
upside down bender after the daily hack  
at dry forms with the pick of himself

face up into bark's foolscap, the beat  
of labor sometimes all there is to eat.

## Small Blind

When every bluff ends finally in the muck  
of chance, and what blade-thin luck you get to hold  
goes dull, scraping away at your limited stake,  
what you need to get out of this universal hole

(that is not so much black as blind)  
is to know when to dare and when to fold  
your arms or the laundry or the last lonely pair of kings  
on earth – O plastic-coated paper monarchs! – to sweeten a pot

with a departure, turn your back on a bet  
and walk outside with your spine finally straight,  
no longer pushing the empty or full boat  
of hopes your ship may come in. Then you can ace

the test, conquer the longest odds, survive the trips  
and falls – nearly broke, but with a few last chips.

## Monk's Point

How did we get here, disconcerted,  
modulated from familiar evidence

to the nutty, crossing over –  
from what to what exactly? Suspended,

half diminished and (we hope) whole-toned  
at once, peering through leaves

of harmony's upper branches but still as apt  
as an angle of blue skies filmed upside down,

where every morning is Friday the 13th,  
a crepuscule for all the manias and depressions

our bones must sing when we come  
a cropper and dance circles in the opaque spin

of self possession in front of our solo  
colleagues. From here we can find

resolutions to take straight,  
no chaser into the trinkle-tinkle dark,

the tonic only an ugly beauty to

(if we're lucky) play twice. Let's call this  
introspection what it is, a monotone

on the brilliant corners in the bright Mississippi  
of desire. Well. You needn't ask me not

what this misterioso rhythm-a-ning portends;  
it rolls off-minor and round midnight for thee,

and I mean you.

## In the Street Without My Glasses

Blur sips at the blue bowl  
of morning. The heart,

old mole, noses forward  
to sense something of steel, maybe

of stone – without a lens the filth  
is gone. Unrefracted men and women

regress toward a trembling Monet mean,  
trees and marquees go dumb

in the warble of sky,  
and even nameless cars

dodging their promised manslaughters  
gleam like starlings

under bus faces smeared  
to leaf and petal. Someone crosses

the street, a tremolo  
of arm, a shudder of color

smoothed to one age, race and sex  
as light as that shadow

shimmering off the asphalt  
like distant desert heat, the true flicker



we may be. The world  
before the uncorrected eye

brims, marbles, quivers  
over its boundaries, wells.

ISBN 9780996972673

51800 &gt;



9 780996 972673



Passager Books  
Baltimore, MD  
\$18

THE  
BRONX

Pelham Bay Park  
Middleton

Like the woodpecker in this collection's first poem, Bauld pecks away in a "paraddiddle of discovery," a jazz take on the joy and pain of contemporary life as he observes it. Fathers and sons, fading youth, marriage, learning Spanish, Basquiat, the teaching of nuns, the lives of monks comprise only some of the objects of his roving imagination. *The Uncorrected Eye* gives us a fresh view of life with new and bracing insights.

JO SARZOTTI, *Mother Desert*

What is the "uncorrected eye" that Harry Bauld celebrates? This uncorrected eye, he writes, reveals a world that "brims, marbles, quivers / over its boundaries, wells." And that is what his poems do. From his jazz-like improvisations to the whip-like turns in his sonnets, from his "magic cloud of memory" to the "limping lion of history," Bauld presents us with a world we thought we knew well. Now, in these beautifully crafted poems, we feel as though we are meeting it for the first time.

FRED MARCHANT, *Said Not Said*

