

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

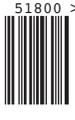
shimmering off the asphalt
like distant desert heat, the true flicker

we may be. The world
before the uncorrected eye

brims, marbles, quivers
over its boundaries, wells.

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THE
BRONX

Pelham Bay Park
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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*

