

GRACE BUTCHER

Destination

Her hands, he thinks,
are so small
they will be lost
on his body.
They will not know
where to go.

But like falling of feathers
they drift across
the singing and crying
of his skin,

wrap like roots
around the very center
of all his songs
and fears.

Her arms, he thinks,
are so slender
they will not be able
to hold his vastness.

But when, in the sullen
steel-gray gears and machinery
of the dreams he himself
does not even see,
the invisible earth
opens beneath him,

and he falls, he finds himself
held above the abyss
as easily as if
he were a child.
He burrows deeper into
that circle of love,
not knowing that he murmurs
in his sleep
all the necessary words.

Her legs, he thinks,
can never match his strides
nor anchor him contentedly
in any kind of harbor.

But strongly as he moves
over snow, over meadows

and mountains, she is there
moving steadily in her own brightness,
sometimes beside him,
sometimes in her own path.
And she is the one who waits.

Amazed and glad,
he lies down over her.
Wrapped in her body,
comforted, he sleeps
and finally feels
a stillness, as of deep water.

He does not drift away.

Vision

The snow falls
leaving black holes
in the shape of the feet of deer.

The wet snow hangs
from the shagbark hickories;
the deer drift through the dark below.

They will bed down under the weather
that rages in the tops of the trees.
Their calm eyes will close.

And from my high bedroom
the late light slants alone down the air,
piling up gold on the snow.

I curl up, tolerated
among the warm bodies of the deer,
offering them nothing.

The gold melts from my clothing.
The comfortable dark comes down
all white, and covers us.

I will stay out there
as long as I can, dozing,
smelling apples under the snow.

That is all I know now
of the dreams of deer.
Mine do not matter to them.

I have slept among them;
that is dream enough,
And the dark scent of apples in the silver wind.