

MARK WEISS

PASTORAL

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The eternal ghost dance.
So many creatures to recover. Sow
dragon teeth, or teeth of bison, skin of toad or crimson feather.

A prince has it that we need to grant
hedgerows and the margins of fields
to the cultivation of wildness.

What then would be the meaning of red
if purity were green?
What for purity and transparent virtue, blue
for divinity purple for kingship.

Furrows ploughed in a blank field.

Tassels
of the tall grasses bent
just so, the wind
just so, the light
forever such.

Terror of night in the forest.

The rest of a life imagining a loved-one.
Testing and rejecting words.

Suspend criteria and the daily facts
attack as if the wagons were circled and it's all
Indians, we like to say, so much fodder.

Make amends to Mother Kali.

If there's a hole in it
kiss it.

A perfect fierceness.

Think, then, of Snow White as the Virgin.
Think of her as the higher gnome.

Queen-Anne's-lace, thistle, dandelion, heather rose foxglove.
Call her "thistle."

Clover buttercup
all manner weeds and grasses
bracken aster
fuschia gorse.

Each blade
peaked with a tuft of wool.

"Marguerite
because it's cut
like a pizza."

"How do you like your camel? One hump
or two?" she asks.

Mary and Snow White white and blue.
The awakening kiss of God
or Prince.

Folk dance/ghost dance.

A critique of pure farming.

The primordial the only show in town.
See what happened?

Top of the morning
top of the town
bog down.

Grow some gorse for the queen of heaven.

Elaborating systems
and throwing them away.

You put your pants on
then your shoes.

Each sock on a line a message to the sun god.

Penny-candies in a twist of paper.
 Who? How? How many
 the hour?

See the details of the making of day. See from whose labor
 small graces.
 Bird Mary lost of thanks.

Stripped off the roofs. As need arose
 made graves and gardens of.

Chalk horse
 brings horse-god,
 mates.

Nothing so much as a figure for continuity, the task
 as ever to hold it together break
 it apart hold
 it together.

Announcement of gender in a cast of hip.
 The gradual ascension of consciousness.
 A long summer of feathers and shells.

Overhead, a classful of girls clog-dances, they practice
 to flatten the field, how to make of it
 the hard earth of a cottage floor. Ferocious pounding of a forge, swords, spears,
 clatter of horses, these little girls
 learning to become the nation's story. Conquest,
 or at least resistance.

Dwarfs in the grotto see the Virgin.
 She appears in blue and white to seven
 chukka chukka she appears in blue and white
 and the prince kiss kiss
 will wake her.

Clothes on the line so many prayer-flags.

The dog says: "Behave like a wolf to terrify sheep."

Be easy with instinct.

Here, my child, is the lesson of shadows.

As a bee be unto thee.

Both two and frowardness a nest of
who? who? An owl?

What follows? Itch
 too deep to scratch.
 Itchery the eighth vice.
 Cold and wet for the fun of it.
 Want! Wait! Let her come to me!
 And thinks of himself as the stalker.

They chirp they chirp
 and a man can't sleep.

A sailor a tailor a telltale a liar
 and do it again in the clover,
 lost in an ice cream. Absent thee
 from complexity, anticipate
 of little fate the patter.

It was the son or sun the king sent kissed
 the sleeping girl.

Pleasure in the play of wrist within a fixed vocabulary.

Sheen of sun on the black railing, and beyond,
 ebb tide, and beyond
 a green hillside and beyond
 a far one in hazy light, clouds beyond it.

One small cactus on an otherwise bare sill.

On the back of her slacks is written
 "California" in an arch, cleft
 between f and o. Like a vale
 between hills.

One could compile a history of apologies.

Celestial bracelet.

Spanner silence Jazus.
Jazus.
Silence the celestial bracelet
and I'll spanner yez.
Culled spanners of oceans from their celestial path
to a bracelet of feathers, flesh
and silence.
Jazus, the meat comes dear.

Lamb on the run
spam on a bun.

A man with a nose on his nose.
Bird, bracken, moor.