

GYRÐIR ELÍASSON

FROM NO LEMONWOOD GROWS HERE

TRANSLATED BY MEG MATICH

UNCONVENTIONAL TRAVEL POEM II

Startled sometimes
that one
species (the one I
belong to) has overtaken the Earth.
But there's nothing to be done
except
sink into a trainseat
inconspicuously
and close your eyes
to whatever's outside
the window

A HOUSEGUEST IN ENGLAND, 1894

In his final years,
William Morris was depressed.
His friends called him
Million Worries, among themselves.
That was after he
had visited
Iceland twice,
and once is depressing enough,
imagine two times.
He sat at the window
and counted the pigeons pecking
at seeds outside and
cooing in pure
pleasure. I once saw
him hoist himself out
the window and stretch
a scribbled note
toward the pigeons,
entreating them to
carry it with them,
I didn't hear
where to (maybe
it was Iceland).
They pretended
not to see him

BLACKOUT IN THE EAST

It's evening by the time I arrive
at the house. Autumn, low
branches sway outside the window.
A Citroen parked in the yard, and
through the kitchen window I see
you with a light on your forehead —
a pitchblack kitchen, and you,
with light on your forehead. And
when I pass by the window, gravel
crunching underfoot, a ray of light
falls on me and then on
near-luminescent
rhyolite

STONESLUMBER

The house was at the foot of an escarpment.
The overnigheters, afraid of the boulders on the slope,
could hardly sleep those first few nights.
But soon they settled in. Hardly a week had passed
when it started to pour, the clouds
hovering low to the ground, letting loose a deluge of gray
and sometimes even black rainwater.

One night, after the rain had begun, they lay
asleep when a boulder came loose from
the summit and launched into the air
barreling toward them, breaking straight
through the rusted roof before landing
in their bed, knocking them into a sleep
so very deep, so very lasting