

TRICKS OF THE LIGHT

New and Selected Poems



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Midden of kindness, no sugar clogged
Affections to excuse imbalance.
A dog with balance and style instructs

The sheep in this chastity for no
Reason beyond the collie's intent
Designs on the beasts, their pastures.

Later the collie takes up love and
Leaves it again to the imbalance
Of heartthrob, the invasionary

Conundrums, the tartish logics of loss.

✿ All of My Beautiful Dogs Are Dying (1994)

My beautiful dogs are dying and
There are others as beautiful if
I am brave enough in my dotage

To face that beauty again, make it mine
In an authenticity of haunch,
Perfection of desire as of that

Young Brittany who, briefly, hunted
Birds and the very essence of bird,
Sharing with me the sky that had been

Able to intend bird, dog, woman,
Desire. Without the beautiful dogs
No one dares to attend to desire;

The sky retreats, will intend nothing,
Is a ceiling to rebuke the gaze,
Mock the poetry of knowledge.

My death is my last acquiescence;
Theirs is the sky's renunciation,
Proof that the world is a scattered shame

Littering the heavens. The new dogs
Start to arise, but the sky must go
Deeply dark before the stars appear.

✿ Ion, Released from the Vows of Love,
Replies to Socrates

I can only stand and look, my friend,
And tell the tale of Proteus
Again. The shapes you see when my gaze

Holds yours are you because Proteus
Is a mirror, time is a mirror,
You and I and the sun are mirrors.

The poet tells how a leopard sprang
From the eyes of desire; in this
We see the truth that will not make sense

For she loves us beyond our reasons
For inquiring, she replies to us
As the sea replies to the moon's long

Philosophies of motion. My craft
Lies in knowing this far too swiftly
To tell you. It is knowledge that weeps,

The diaspora of the goddess
Whose faith lives in our love of the sun,
Whose gray eyes regard us from the hill.