

THREE POEMS BY WILLIAM BEDFORD

The Frame

Whatever there is of light,
the garden and your smile
take in the quiet of the evening,
a poised sense of October
trembling with chrysanthemums and dreams.
Finished, you relax and sadden.
There are arrangements to be made,
friends to be seen and counted,
and your busying, usual movement
disturbs neither talk nor grass,
a faithful coming and going.
Outside, we talk of the photographs,
haphazard as births and departures,
the light that will suddenly change them.

Sunlight

(For my grandmother)

Scrubbed like a cube of sunlight,
the kitchen walls and the kitchen floor
whitened throughout my childhood,
spreading like an October morning
wild with blackberries and streams.
At the sink, grandmother laundered.
At the table, grandmother read and sewed,
dissecting the new neighbours.

On the doorstep, she dreamed of trees.
And the kitchen whitened around her,
like a cube of scrubbed sunlight,
white wood and red tiles.

In the end, it was ripe with silence,
this room stilled to a glow,
smelling like an October morning,
wild with blackberries and streams.

Merlin Listens To a Thrush

The thrush tells legends
but Merlin has no time for legends.

Standing on a hill,
clawing at a new moon,
he measures faith and cackles when the sun rises.
Like the rain, he changes composition:
wilts, rages, accepts every mood as miracle,
and screams when the rocks will not splinter.

The thrush, against rain, tells legends,
but Merlin has no time for legends,

dying,
in a cold cave,
clawing at the new moon.