

EYES

Cats see blues yellows.
Light projects on a flat screen
 dahlia stars saucer moon.

The florist adds Peace roses goldenrods.
He parses ferns winter pine
 silver dollar eucalyptus.

Humans discern slow-wave light
 pomegranates persimmons
 ripe redness.

A fourth circle of Paradise ultra-violets
 opens to hummingbirds cataract patients.

Shadows move across peripheral twilight
 black-and-white lexicon
 flicker flit freeze.

Motion is the most intense hue.
No lens captures it.
#

GREEN AGAIN

Our primate eye cones absorb blues greens reds.
 Sight range less than pigeons.

My love your eyes taste of willow groves not mangoes.
 Pondwater pools in my mouth.

The Cherokee word is *i-tse-i u-s-di* make green
 renew oneself *U-s'di* Young One.

 We plant seeds. Jade maize emerges.
 The child in my belly dreams green.

Underfoot a zillion grass blades rise.
 They feed everybody. Our hunter eyes scan.

Brown like soil our fingers rustle sedges
waver barely visible in swampwater.

Gentle motions of khaki catfish whiskers *barbels*
smell and taste in a single gesture. Always hungry.

#

ISAAC NEWTON'S OPTICKS: DEFINITIONS

I: *Light consists of Parts both Successive and Contemporary.*
Left-hand piano chords my teacher Mrs. Person solos
deep carpet under the bench her kind eyes sotto voice
whole tones like open eyes four beats. Sixteenth-notes
are confetti. John Thompson's Modern Course for the Piano.

II: *Refrangibility of Rays is their Disposition to be refracted
in passing out of one transparent Body into another.*
Bach Prelude 1 in C Major sounds each arpeggio a box
stacked on the next and my breath through them repeats
invisibly in the parlor. The metronome follows blood pulse
finite measures broken chords passed left hand to right.

III: *Reflexibility of Rays is their Disposition to be reflected.*
Add silver salts. Her name was Irma. Rimless glasses.
Light passes onto a glass plate reflecting her shadow.
Virgil her husband played violin their duets diminish.
Her portrait sixty years later falsely recurs on this expanse.

IV: *The Angle of Incidence is that Angle, which the Line
described by the incident Ray contains with the Perpendicular.*
Queen Anne balloon chair walnut and satin upholstery
piano's table black keys raised trip stumbling fingers
riddle scales break tempos her hands parallel mine
curved. Her clean notes nearly solid clef lines.

#

LABELS FROM THE FIELD MUSEUM: CARDINALS

9 July 1881

J. Bush on this day: *collector*
at *Blue Island, Cook Co.*
one ♀ *female* buff-
and tangerine-feathered

December 11, 1883

within the specimen drawer
one iridescent crimson ♂ *male*

neck twisted to uncertain sight

September 16, 1893

Museum *founded*
to house collections assembled

25 February 1907

Mound City, Ill.
♀ *female* still plump
peach streaks across sky-gray breast

Unmarked date:

T. Wright at Dane Co., Ill.
another ♂ *male*
with the finest head crest

Undated

♀ *female* *fell from nest*
at Orrington and Garrett Ave.:
desiccated, ashy brown,
a solid ghost collapsed

December 27, 1913

♂ *male* caught at *Salamonia, Indiana*
now a pressed faded feather rose

Indecipherable dates:

47 *Cardinalis* specimens
eyes sightless behind
white-cotton eye sockets

July 2002

The loss of these living
things is tempered
by a quiet tenderness.

#

TIPPING POINT

The moment curtains billow light.
The Cimarron River does not cross Cimarron City but sun.

The moment you grip. Tow me
up a levee-steep step. Allosaur bones settle underground.

The tripswitch for autumn.
When freeze extinguishes green. Vermillion scalds horizons.

When gingko trees shed tongues.
Their fade-out chorus.

One is a snake-eye number.
Then odd eleven.

White lace fails. Roses shatter.
Wind enters. Seines sand-yellow strands.