

PROJECT PAPERS

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JANINE POMMY VEGA

LETTER FROM THE WOODS

It's 8:00, the birds are calling—
the hermit thrush,
the wood thrush, the preacher bird,
and the conversationalist
whose real name I wish I knew
Crow passes, the light gets darker
and I'm resting here for five minutes
thinking of you

I ate my way up the side of the mountain
grazed at the top
and ate my way down
Bright yellow green on stone outcroppings
mauve and deep purple in the groves
I've been thinking of you
and addressing the trees, hugging the old ones,
all day thinking

My problem is, I care about you
what happens with you
and me together
tomorrow, now, the week after next
And I usually don't think about that,
about any of that—so I'm worried
Why do you love me?
I think about that, too

Turkey buzzard has a tiny red head
he flew by the summit
while we ate, and a top-heavy grouse
dived off into the woods
What did you do all day
under the sky?
One butterfly had an iridescent body
with a double set of purple wings.

Windham High Peak, NY, July 6, 87.

TRAVELOGUE

To merely uncover the depths of love
By sitting here same spot establishes dignity
No more submissive than he was to his mother
A love forgotten but the lover's body remains
A ring of pure light circles the earth every hour
The point from which you begin to distort what you're trying to say
My imaginary brother follows me like a shadow
The woman upstairs says she thinks her dog found something that resembles a gerbil &
ate it
Neitzsche was fun to read in prison
You can't love something that doesn't exist
The church, family, a tree whose branches fell off in the storm
No one will punish you if you feel too much pleasure
It's not cold outside but inside—it's like winter
What I saw when I looked down at the woman & her lover was a reflection of the shadow
of the heart broken into shards
The agency of the letter moves through the fabric of fate
I had a crush on my neighbor but she moved out of town
The dress is made of cotton—it's really a jumper
How to hold a stranger at arm's length & comfort him?
The strangest part was when there was no place to go, no home, & I had to sit on stoops,
out-doors, or loiter in shops, linger in restaurants over glasses of iced coffee &
mint tea
Unable to speak the language of the Cantonese waitress whose job was "off the books" &
whose livelihood depended on the amount of money I tipped her
Everything derives from a lack of attention, broken span into which something drops
Depending on the day of the week or your mother I love you, hate you more some days
I stand on the edge of town, light burning in the window
I drive through hopeless Canada, aching with dignity
I walk into the bodega & buy a lightbulb & a loose cigarette
A transparency of hair catches the flame of his first desire
They met in 1965 & lived together 4 years
Dark hallway filled with guys I don't know, smoking
I've saved some dinner, all I have to do is heat it up
When she returns from her job she neither kisses me nor says hello
The people who cut through the fog with scythes went on strike
Desire overcomes inertia, but the stones survive.