



Within the Infinite—Poems

Simon Perchik

J 17 (Calder Poem)

Forrest Gander

Disparity (Calder)

Disparity 2 (Calder)

Whatever Jumps Jumps Out (Kelly)

Whatever Jumps Jumps Out 2 (Kelly)

Dan Chiasson

Plant II *Ellsworth Kelly, 1949*

Postcard to Calder and Louisa *Ellsworth Kelly, 1954*

J 17 (Calder Poem)

Without a backbone this butterfly
becomes a weightlifter, each wing
put to work as the slow climbing turn

that once wandered around in the open
— you're used to sleeves, both arms
warmed by that descent into darkness

where each death makes way for the next
— it's natural you gather here, side by side
— in this old neighborhood it's the Earth

that's shining overhead, eased up
already stripped from your shadow
turning its face from the ground.

—Simon Perchik

Forrest Gander

Disparity
In 1946 it did
all that trembling
it's still
doing now with
a keel of
lead
annealed to the backside
to counterbalance red
oxide cart-
wheels, pressure-curved
wire, stainless
steel, and black however many legs (vec-
tors of thrust), just
a few oscillations
given skewed
amplitudes,
intercourse,
periods,
and bends of
force in tension, lightly
lightly stretching
our attention.

Disparity 2

They're lying
who say they don't
remember
the shock of seeing
vertical foliage
explode into this flock
of blackbirds flying
perfectly in place.

In his later years, he taught
a black minotaur to walk
as along a tightrope,
the S-curve of its back
poised like a snake
on its coil
above those lickable,
laminose thighs,
its great noir head
disguised as an
exfoliation of leaves
or eyes.

Whatever Jumps Jumps Out

It hums thru the fence— energy
between one color field and
another: white stropped against
black gets stropped back.

Paris

48.8566° N
2.3422° E

New York City

40.7128° N
74.0060° W

Forms pack into the canvas as if
it were a size too small. Given the
wall, they want still more. Does color
dilate? Can your eyes take the weight?

34.0522° N
118.2437° W

We behold the heft
of what he sees. And who. Slats
of light on the wall fall
through cracks in the landing.

Los Angeles

Look, the colors
are conversing.
About what?
Joy, man, joy!

San Francisco

37.7749° N
122.4194° W

42.3234° N
73.5464° W

Not aggressive, but the shapes
are companionably pushy.
Buddies, like wrestlers
rubbing shoulders.

Spencertown

Whatever Jumps Jumps Out 2

Black string. Black holes. Hung between.

Not transition but erotic conjunction
like a Balinese dancer
quivering at the door jamb
before entering the room.

Turned-on by green and blue,
black begins to act its color.

What the paintings still suggest:
so many bodies lie
in one another's context.

Black light. Shadow white.

Recruited by necessity, colors bind
into objects unwearied
by any lovely theory.

His lines limn the face of rebellion
against space.

Could have been the green apple made him sick.

Not too far to go to see
the boundaries of distinction shift
in bright camaraderie.

Plant II

Ellsworth Kelly, 1949

More like a keyhole or a silhouette
Kept in a locket, I lack the talent,
The instinct, the taste for life:

Eleven below zero, January eighth.
Frostbitten by the strobe light,
I shiver in the residue of thought.

A field of me would be an emergency.
I'm better understood in negative.
I'd visit, but the undertaker took my car.

—Dan Chiasson

Postcard to Calder and Louisa

Ellsworth Kelly, 1954

An eye somebody stitched futurity upon,
The dawn turned upside down, a domino blown open;

A two dimensional tunnel and a throat at night;
Hail Mary from the past caught in broad daylight,

Then not caught, bobbled just as time ran out;
As time ran out, this postcard sent

To the country, to Connecticut, delayed,
Diverted, wrong address, wrong century,

And now it's ours, and nobody's, this hourglass,
This sieve: a landscape upended. A kindness.

— Dan Chiasson