

**WIND
& THE
AUGUR**

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Wind & the Augur
by Stella Corso

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FIRST EDITION

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It must be love

we talk about death
me the book

the building on fire

can water
be on fire

I think yes
in a sexual way

I feel sexy now
like putting on jewelry

how cold are you 1 to 10
how tired am I

I have this thing
I think I should use it

you probably won't like it
when I say

pull my hair
I'm growing bigger yes

I'm changing I think

I need you
I need you to watch

...

We were on our way again

we were going somewhere
or so I hoped

you were driving
I said I know of a place

where three states touch
I touched Vermont

and it disappeared
I looked to you

and felt a metaphor empty
I said the weather is as it should be

my pleasure comes in degrees
I feel hostile in a damp state

and angered by wind
you were on your phone

I was kicking
pebbles from cement

small and roundish
pink in nature

and in New Hampshire
it rained

...

If it is beautiful we work backwards

to give the people a language they can use
using words to guide them to a subtle plane

like touching but more silent
who can tell what the old object has touched

or who has been touched by the new thing
people come from all over just to touch

something new or something really old
they come from out of town

they come for the weekend
they touch each other while touching trees

they touch themselves while looking at barns
they touch antiques without asking

they touch the grass that asks them not to
they touch the waitress lightly on the elbow and nod

they are touched by impossible light
by the arid expanse of neighbors

by local produce
by the expense of our labor

I stand outside of all this
a place once called the touchless

that has since become ouchless
was it from neglect or whimsy

that I was made
to want to touch something cruel

I thought he must have felt it
love but I wasn't invited

...

The house winked at me

but I was afraid to go in
he tried to grasp the concept

but it rolled away
he moves easily through the day

and through the town
and this is what drives me

in a slow car from hell
in circles around his neighborhood

from time to time
and from town to town

how one bleeds quickly into the next
despite the signs

the townspeople know
but will never tell

when you find you are thirsty
you have already been thirsty

...

Suppose it is summer

suppose it is summer and the sun
is glowing inside

and in its abject heat
it is dawning on me

I was not properly nourished
I have not been insured

with ideas
and I can see winter

is crushing you too
my soaked braids

your sick mouth
and the two men I saw

I thought
were holding hands

they were only holding gloves

...

Everyone here is getting ready to die

under all that
the day was not difficult to predict

what comes first is mood
I pick at myself

to pick on myself
I pour myself into others

pour you, poor myself
this is how a war is worn

consider it
a wet and peeling church

observe the way I desecrate
this fruit

how I auger through
the thickness

of pith
deep within

the mirth

...

I have seen the shortcomings

of your fingers
your desire turning

bonnets
jagged coast

from interior eye
where seclusion is king

an empty robe
hung up on a line

lone houseplant
in a cold room waving

and all your pretty things
tucked away

to be inferior
that someone

will love you for it
you make virtue

face mountain
quiver whether

love do too

...

When I was born perhaps

half alive, half in love
with one leg in

who could sit dumbly
with one flower for so long

did anyone really believe
the fruit full of vitamins

and the particular ease of Sunday
fills a space that we can recognize

the air has changed and we sense
but cannot judge the impact

a flower that began
like me a seed

and like an idea
it grew

...

There is more than one way to enter a house

or to come upon a meadow

I came upon the meadow

by way of the field

I was moved to go out

because of the fawn

from the corner of my eye

I was moved to go out into the woods

because of the water

and the wine I had been going without

I was moved toward the edges

because of the sound of laughter

and the promise of light at its ends

but I would never let a mouse drown

or cross a boundary with the woodpecker

so as not to disturb his work

I walked around it

then arrived and stood peering

at the water I had thought

what in turn I found

was man-made

guarded or admired by the man
who had made it

I mean the man who had it made
and I saw at last what was not meant for me

no more than the ropes
that had been conceived

to keep me out

...

I went looking for sun

but paused for some shade
I lit a cigarette like any good intruder

I watched a landscape shorn
inhaling the florid nature of it

does that make me an outdoor person?

and do I look like the type
who would self-medicate

for business or for pleasure

I captured a leaf in air
I sunbathed on cement

I kissed a tree for experience
teach me how to bark

...

I was happy for a moment in the grass

a walk in the park as they say
but I litter when I move

now the bugs are onto me

can it be so hard
to think what I say

and know what I mean
peach on the street

on my shoe
color of the window

on the building of my blouse
little fragment of

a language
of an idea of self

the shit stain smeared it
as I paused for relief

...

But can I rest here on the grounds of faith

on precisely manicured lawns
on a holy mound, finely trimmed

at an advantage from this vantage
so high I hear bells beneath the soil

but can I rest here on the grounds of judgment
and who will or will not allow this

if I am looking too sexy at church
if there are kids across the street

there are those I know for whom
their body is their temple

but fail to wear the mark of beauty
though they may be sexy nonetheless

and there are those I know for whom
their body is their servant

but are neither sexy nor beautiful
like those I know for whom

their body is a bridge
yet they are uglier still

than those you know for whom
their body is a casket

we must bear the weight of their beauty
on all this thick earth

...

A line divides the sky

babies fall through it
sickly babies

evaporating man
I am a scribe

so tell me of your see-through coat
and I will pump your shadows

through this lively corridor
combining personal experience

with social critique
66 snapshots of a Saturday night

lives colored by sex or loneliness
the stamp ruins it

makes it a product
the day filled with breasts and chaos

a few of whom were famous
I wanted to tell him things

but gave up the urge to try
and eventually the urge

to wonder at all
is this a wedding or a funeral?

...

They say the moment

you come into yourself
is a blessed thing

but I believe it is holier
to come into another

if I believed in others

I believe in numbers
and their constant assortments

their terrible laws

I believe in the fire
behind the wall

that is waiting to happen
I know that water

is the real destroyer
I know the two are huddled

like a wretched pair of children
beneath the dinner table

to see how bad I have been

...

The men fall to digging

such is the temper of the times
the outside shines all over

but there is no canopy
only diamonds of the first water

and some slightly dotty imposters
with the brilliant flash of streetwalkers

like bogus queens teething a rose
the diamond is most prized for its hardness

hardness is defined as resistance
to scratching

gypsum can scratch talc
but talc cannot scratch gypsum

the human fingernail can scratch both
not unlike the diamond

which is prized for its density
the density of the human body

may be measured in water
a crown may also be immersed

or simply tossed against a hard surface

an emerald cannot withstand such vigor
such is the case of a real gem

real gems are measured in air
unlike those plainer cousins

you must burn to tell

...

The opal is optimal

it sometimes finds its home
in a buried shell, a bone
or ancient log

it is optical
because it does not show its true colors

you cannot look at it straight on
you must look at it from every angle

consequently, fewer gemstones suffer more
than the opal

though you could say it doesn't feel pain

but to measure pain is tricky
it is always moving

you must be careful when approaching the pain
as if from behind

...

In the stranded park

stood a distorted goal
and somewhere an errant little hair

gets in and disrupts me
I feel everything

is a pregnancy
is a plump equation

I feel queenly on a papasan
birthing fresh and rotten ideas

perhaps you can tell me some
new information that might stick

why all the grays contain y's
though I doubt I could follow

a differing plot
from what I have seen so far

women deliver men into the world
men deliver men into the ground

...

That which awaits

despairs, the pear
self-immolating in the sun

the tree emits
a somber fragrance

sweet bird little bird
bird-like

smudge in the shape of
the mothers are singing

from their nests
the world is a ball

it is round for the taking
and all that one can see

one can eat
except for the fruit

which is full of sand

...

It was more than just the men

who occupied our minds
it was what we thought we deserved

from our surroundings
alone by the river

my bicycle chained to the tree
if I were someone else

I know exactly
how I would kill me

what kind of woman
could really trust a rustle

at least the kind I am
naturally

I think of the tree
mangled hands that made it

wind and the augur
that made me

to have been obscured
by love's narrow aim

and underneath
where an arrow might have been

an error in the wood

...

It has come to my attention

that one of us must always look away
in order to incite our graceful ruin

as one might come to accept
a bad omen that has marked them

or as one might come to love
their bad finger

as result of a botched job
limb not entirely useless

for saving me from
what I've peeked into

where I have often found
in a dusted room

the cradle rocking the hand

...

Haven't I been good

have I picked every orange

have I locked myself up

away from the sun

I was once prejudiced

against

the things I touched

they did not judge me

I mouthed nothing

now my mouth is full

and my bed

today I woke up in a bed

not my own

but of my own accord

my tongue was ferning

it was teeming

you liked it

you said

it feels like we have arrived

when the children shake
the foundation

splinter the wood
to its seam

I promise
not to use my teeth

...

My desire drives the car

that leads me to your house
that drops me at your door

bump on the road
we swerved to miss

a half-grinning thing
still moving maybe

and when your house moves
I move with it

and my car has a mind to
turn this thing around

I usually do
but today I cried

for a combination of you
and my desire

what was that lump
we go back to look

...

I saw a ruby in the flesh

and the wound it took
to put it there

I screamed and screamed at it

still it gleamed and went around
terrorizing men

seducing their senses
causing wars of origin

finally I smashed the thing

I pulverized it into a fine powder
I fed the powder to a dying priest

I forced it down the throat of a king
I smeared it into the tear ducts of a prince

then scattered the rest over water
on a whim

and I tell you, that thing
it still had a face

Some excerpts from *Wind & the Augur* have appeared in slightly different forms in the following journals:

Fanzine, Jellyfish, jubilat, Notnostrums, Coconut, Hematopoiesis and *Forklift, Ohio*