

Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
Poems	1
The White Spider in My Hand	3
Man in the Well	4
Onslaught	5
Twin Shafts of Light	6
Monday at the Zoo	7
Ten Seconds with an Allosaurus	8
Where Dinosaurs Roam	9
Passive Voice	10
Splendor in the Air	11
Of Moonlight & Wild Cherries	12
The Schizophrenic in West Virginia	13
Postmodern Jester	14
Little Gossip	15
The Wound	16
Death and the Rope	17
Playground	18
Captured	19
Moving Target	20
Two Days	21
Three Thoughts	22
Postmodern Jonah	23
Artemis	24
Amazon	25

Never Ask a Cloud to Marry You	26
Description	27
The Purblind Witch	28
The Mugging	29
Transformation	30
Children of the Moon	31
Marbles	32
Lucky Me	33
At the National Gallery of Art	34
Clouds	35
Peas	36
Hummingbird	37
World at Night	38
Vocation	39
The Call to Freedom	40
Cradle & Buggy	41
Recession	42
The Old Ones	43
Beautiful	44
Common Rat	45
Squirrels	46
Pond	47
Summer's Play	48
Butterflies	49
Death of a Mouse	50
Meditation upon January	51
Wild Garlic	52
The Skull	53
A Tangible Word	54
Apple	55
The Voyage Out	56

Reaching	57
Halo	59
Ode to Toni Morrison	60
Trinity	61
Three Bells	62
The Sisters	63
School Daze	64
Effrontery	65
A Pure Gust of Wind	66
A Diagram of Easter	67
Sugar	68
Confessions of a Literary Hiker	69
Night Sky with Crickets	70
Photograph of the Awkward Shoe	71
Watching a Movie about Killer Baboons	72
Fishing with Aphrodite	73
The Pregnant Hour	74
To Theodore Roethke	75
The Portable Altamira	76
<i>About the Author</i>	77

The White Spider in My Hand

I.

The white spider in my hand likes
to pretend he's a rogue on the make.
I've seen him wink at a hundred women,
but only one has responded to his advances.
His eyes are like sapphires, she says
with a voice almost hoarse with desire.
Together they'll satisfy the angel of death.
Together they'll court the bones of the dead.
Together they'll unmask the accidental shaman
before a galaxy made hot by the stars.

II.

The white spider in my hands knows
only the blue mountains of West Virginia.
He sleeps curled in my palm whenever
the cedar trees are covered with snow.
His snoring is like wind chimes, says the odd
woman seduced by his glittering eyes.
She's curious like a squirrel on a rail.
She's skilled with dream and fantasy.
She's ardent with the repeated request that
the spider abandon my hand for her web.

Man in the Well

The rough calculation
of moss & stone does
not equal forty days

& the nights are as
even as the teeth
of a saw.

If I drop twenty feet,
I'll be in the heart
of the well.

If I shout, no one
will hear me above the din
of the gathering crowd.

If I cling to the bucket,
someone will pull me
to the airy surface

where a gray-eyed child
sings to the women
who await the new plenty.

Onslaught

I say "cotton" & the door creaks.

Sparks fly. Hot wind lifts my hair.
I am neither gracious nor kind.

All the eligible bachelors.
All the pretty women.
No one wants to marry.

Today I only need to spin in place.

The willow speaks Portuguese to me.
I am hot like the interior of a beehive.
I dimple & blush.

Words abandon me
before I can explain my theory of love
& how Rumor gives birth
to a baby with fourteen names.

Some say there were fourteen stones
in Virginia Woolf's pockets when she drowned.