

Judith Saul Stix

TO YOU, WALT, AND TO OTHERS

You huge, you splendid celebrator,
Walt, we know you,
jolly old head still laughing at us;
but we know a laugh or two ourselves,
and we love you,
even if you didn't succeed at remaking the world.

Poets and teachers,
in the last rays of the sun your pointing arms
are long, long shadows across the world.
The flower gardens show the darkness' patterns,
rose day, rose night,
long, long from where you stand.
We read your hieroglyphs in the garden,
flowers of unknown names yet familiar
whose huge whole faces of orange, purple, yellow,
brighter than zinnias
appear and disappear in all our kitchens,
in all our mantelpiece bouquets.

I envy all gardeners, not their spaces,
yards narrow or broad, but their uses,
to choose, to bring forth, to harvest,
for whom giving and having are one, the inseparable
thing;
and I envy the poets (but of them only the great ones)
their reaching toward the sun's rise, brightness
crossing me
as the late sun creeps through the gardens narrow or
broad,
as the rain falls, splashing the just and the unjust.
All gardeners are, all poets must be, just.