

Bruce Agte

BROOKLYN

Red brick house, gray dusk, white pigeons
on the rooftops.

I don't want to be inside and I don't want
to be outside.

I want to be on the west coast of Mexico,
my body grown enormous, like weeds.

I want to be the ocean the sky and the salt
mist passing blind and deaf and alive
over the mountains.

The back alley darkens to rain.
The corner market out of milk closes early.
The saturday afternoon shops draw their
shades halfway down.
It doesn't matter.

So I turn the key in my steel door.
Afternoons like this a man weds his misery.
Wash off a plate and fork and open a can of
beans.

Let it get dark without turning on lights
and pour a glass full of whiskey.

Lord, thank you.
I don't care about Mexico.
I've got this damned place in Brooklyn where
the wind comes up from the shipyard
Blind and deaf every night in the dying
rain.

RUST

Walt Whitman said, "the efflux of the soul is
happiness."

As the efflux of the chorus frog is music;
As the efflux of the blossom is nectar, fragrance
and pollen;
As the efflux of iron is its oxide.

What is the shape of happiness?
What is its chemical makeup and what
Is it *for*? Maybe it is an element
Moving through all things

Necessary as oxygen and almost as abundant.
Wind seems to contain it, and stones,
And riverwater contains it in equal parts
With the element called *misery*,

But it is an element by nature
Not prone to containment.
It comes into me quietly and the next moment
Says flux, Agte, flux! let me out!