

JEREMY TAGER

DELVAUX'S DREAM

(Belgian surrealist painter b. 1897)

Women with dimples as deep as pockets
hide their children among the weeds
and sleep open-eyed
The names of extinct birds
interrupt their dreams.

They stand, arms linked, in full sun
to compare disasters.
They separate like tendrils of rain;
dismantled world.

Women with voices tired of the rain,
walk with wheels cradled in their arms
and feed on the underbelly of the moon.

Boats scrape bottom
and the women,
as pale as the skeletons of birds,
are either sleepwalker or alchemist now;
they shake their fingers at the sun
and still wrestle with a name for silence.

DIANE FAHEY

WINDOW CATS

A spring Saturday. After a week of quiet busyness
the village timbers settle one breath deeper.

In the dim room: presences, a holding silence
behind glass . . . Their otherness glitters, draws me
up the drive to gaze at their indecipherable
dream. One curves, pure black, along the saddle
of the rocking horse; the other, a porcelain shape
tabbily perfect under chipped grey nostrils:
both posed, in possession, and every hair a master-
stroke. Behind slits in topaz, each is an intimate
absence staring me back down the drive, the tabby
leaping out into the window frame to watch me away,
then vanishing back into that stillness, that
composed power, on which they ride and they fly
to old Assyria.