

BIRDMAN

sweaty
I step over the margin
onto the beach
a sure scrunch of balled sand now
instead of polypy pulpy
earth
rinsed cleanliness
in place of steamy cliffs

oozing trees
festooned in gamey vine
giving way nearer shore
to squads of mangrove
raised on pimply platforms
humid humming with insects

now I stride on the line of eyesight
to a pile of rock
and I come to a vantage
and a ¼ mile off stands
a solemn jabiru
silent sentinel in a dirty feather coat
pylon legged salt silted
the pendulous beak
hangs like a slack male member / a banana flower
budding with an oily
crimson black promise

he eyes the tide
then suddenly catching sight of me
he flaps to a run
cantilevering he ponderously wafts the air
unfurls the sails
and with legs dragging
beats up slowly over the beach
powerfully contemplative

and I am glad at the sight
for a moment he seemed stark
moribund
guttled static
like a blind caged parrot

but he finally made it

sailed off with scaly legs retracted
hovering off
great gaunt seaplane
sailing slow
solid august
surreptitious
over the mangroves.

P. REES

DISENGAGEMENT

I prepare for your going
with hardened heart,
telling your faults
like beads in the night.
Sins long forgiven
are raked for a spark.
I need a fire
to warm myself by
when you're gone.
Add no more grains
to the years' hoard of love;
it will make bitter bread
when you're gone.
You will not know,
but please forgive
this final cowardice.

DERRY PARKER