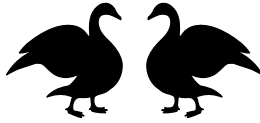


THE CONFUSION OF MOURNING



For Glory Sasikala Franklin

1

The night was lit by flares
that sent a cold light over the road.

In your home, even a glimmer, a candle's
quiet glow, chilled your body.

2

Each day, the road waits for you,
and it is always night and fire.

The flavors of each meal you cooked for him
sting your nostrils.

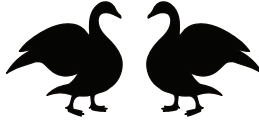
3

You are living again, but how wounded
you are! how brave!

When night floods back like a river of fire,
you are singed by flames.

CHARLES ADÉS FISHMAN

FATHER SHAMAN



For Tamara, During a Long Illness

Daughter, I am
your witch-doctor tonight
and come to heal you

I am your medicine man
come to blunt and soften
the jagged blades
of lightning that strike
downwards

I would heal you, child,
would seal your wounds
so not one more drop
of your spirit floods
the darkness

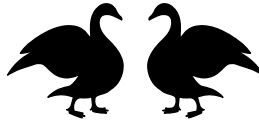
I come this night
to repair
all that has been ripped
and burned: I can bear
your pain no longer

and bring joy to comfort you
fire to warm your bones
Daughter, I am here

to anneal all
that has been broken
to calm and strengthen you
to father your long-delayed
renewal.

CHARLES ADÉS FISHMAN

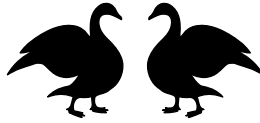
SHADOW WINGS



The hand is an artifact from the sixteenth century
yet it points to the future where stars race
and death breaks in waves and race
smolders for atonement
is impossible
and there is no release there is no
reaching it
for we are lost in the nebulae we are swaddled
in darkness and what brightens
clouds over
a black effulgence a doused
radiance:
for we live in exile we live under
shadow wings
forbidden to return.

CHARLES ADÉS FISHMAN

BIRDS ARE FLYING



through a city shower
under indoor trees

like drips of rain
scattering

Here where fall will not
arrive some leaves

are still green and a brick
fireplace breathes

orange and blue-tipped flames

At this small table
you sit across from me

stitching me to the world,
to the far-back past:

family language memory: ties
and tides of blood

Rain comes harder now
in dense slashes in passions

of fire and song but, for a split
second, a curtain lifts

and through a snowfall
of leaves

birds are flying