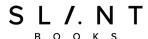
Matters for You Alone

Matters for You Alone Poems

Leslie Williams



MATTERS FOR YOU ALONE

Poems

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for a friend whose heart demands the infinite

Who breaks the thread, the one who pulls, the one who holds on? $-{\sf James\ Richardson}, \textit{Aphorisms}$

MOONSTONE, TIGER'S EYE

It's called *chatoyance*, the gems' bands of reflected light. Bright blinked streaks in metamorphic rock, rock that makes up much of the earth's crust here at the grassy boundary where I'm lying creaturely as a shrew, pressing cheek to ground at cat's-prowl level, watching stalks come out and beaks go in.

Night hunters, I'll learn from you.

It's not like looking for arcane cave marks or shadows on an ultrasound. What there is to know is like the cool within stone vaults, while outside summer's wrinkling through the foothills' pleats, sunlight through the chinks.

I would creep closer. I would be less about things and more inside them.

I

IF YOU PREFER NOT TO FILL OUT THE VISITOR CARD

In the film loop at the entrance to the aquarium, Jacques Cousteau tells of a dolphin in captivity who, on the death of her companion, stubbornly kept the corpse from sinking. I think about my body and its flagging spirit, nudging it up for air.

Have you ever asked for glory? When Moses did, God hid him in the cleft of a rock, covered him with His hand and passed on by. When Moses came down his face was shining fearfully such that he had to wear a veil.

There was one dolphin I grew attached to, came back often to visit. His face, like he swallowed a canary. The perpetual smile lost me in an ocean, another flesh, a tank. Stayed with me in kindness I hadn't felt or given in a while.

As I entered the Sunday door, the woman in the denim shirt clasped my hand, said *welcome*. Her eyes were lit with the greatest greeting, as if for the sun itself. I had to turn and run away, unable to stay a minute more. In a flash-burn instant I became bearable, but then the kindness itself became too much to bear.

PILGRIM CROSSING

I watched the well-washed women in pearls and power suits stride across the seaport, smashing wet leaves underfoot, my own precious hours jimmied loose and spiraling away, the mountain looming in the far off, sphinxlike. I'd been harboring a home-dream, the almost active hope. At salty bars I'd belly up, listen to the locals talk, see them laugh, and in the morning lie so blithely, drinking up my breakfastunvarnished, crude, most true. I walked down to Kinkos, put the letter—dear *L.*—in the mail. Thin crust of snow so crystalline it broke under my boots. I didn't know to whom I was always saying sorry, sorry. But now I do.