

## GRAY KOCHHAR-LINDGREN

### Two Poems

#### Making Claims

My friends: philosophers, as you know, like to *make claims*.

    This and that are true,  
universally, as the evidence shows beyond a shadow  
    of a doubt, that tremulous shadow that moves the great machine  
    to start its engines—(this is called *dialectics*)—and is then O-  
bliterated by the blinding halogens that shine, like pure  
    number, from the Acro-  
polis on down through the boulevards of history.

They light our paths in the heat of noon.

Me? I prefer clam chowder on Thunder Bay,  
or a clammy afternoon's Coke in Cairo, GA,  
where the mosquitoes, gorged with blood  
and lethargy, take to their hammocks  
with lemonade in tow.

Ice-cold.

I prefer the Empedoclean whorl  
of a milk-shake, *chocolate*, at the drug-store.  
Whipped cream with a cherry on top.

Claims, the moles whisper among themselves  
as they scuttle through the hard ground,  
are the *whiplash*  
of the Excluded Middle.

They extract blood.

It's too hot for all of that.  
I prefer an old, scuffed hat.

## Six Notes on Theory and Poetry

### I

#### *Initiations*

There is no first or second:  
leading is following,  
concurrently swirling  
in the wash of words.

Writing:  
the *and*, the *but*, and the *or*.  
Magnificently,  
the *alongside* and the *with*.

Language-events within a field,  
autumnal, golden,  
within a terrain of the world,  
vectors and lines of flight—  
releasing the compacted, the pressurized, the stratified

Coming up for air, coming up from the wreck  
with the sunlight a blur,  
brightening as we break the surface.

Words, circulate—

### II

#### *Titles*

“The Word God”  
“Staccato”  
“Writing on the Wall”  
*Narcissus Transformed*  
*TechnoLogics*

### III

#### *Work Habits*

Poetry in the morning,  
philosophy in the afternoons,  
reading by sunlight,  
lamplight, arclight,  
and the dreamlight of the moon.  
On the weekends, laundry and the yard.

### IV

#### *Distinctions*

- a. Compression
- b. Rhetorics and traditions, crisscrossings—
- c. The abstraction-concrete continuum (but...)
- d. The explanatory-presentation continuum (but....)

### V

#### *Examples*

Celan:  
“Speak—  
but keep yes and no unsplit.  
and give your say this meaning:  
give it the shade.”

Hegel:  
“This simple infinity...may be called the simple essence of life, the soul of the world...it pulsates within itself but does not move, inwardly vibrates, yet is at rest.”

### VI

#### *Images*

Folds, the implications  
of origami—  
hands,  
lips,  
the step and the counter-step.  
Singular multiplicities  
and  
the sea:

(from Homer to Montale),  
and then, re-  
turning  
exfoliating the golden fields  
where in great invisible waves  
the seeds are stripped from the stalks,  
then carried by the winds abroad, a-  
loft.