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The Day the Mountains Scream

Greg J. Hobbs

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The Day the Mountains Scream

THE DAY THE MOUNTAINS SCREAM

An ordinary day half a continent away,
Oakbrush and aspen burn gold and scarlet,
Streams are lower and clearer, native trout
Settle below rocks to catch a nymph or
Hellgrammite. But bears are desperate,
They roam for food and scratch for dreams,
The day the mountains scream.

An ordinary day half a continent away,
Breakfast coffee and conversation,
Goodbye to family, the morning newspaper,
A subway ride, another cup of coffee,
Hello to colleagues, booting up, checking
Messages, making plans for client lunch,
The day the mountains scream.

An ordinary day half a continent away,
Lewis writes in his journal, marks fresh charts,
Hunters set out, other men point the tips
Of their long poles West and push upstream,
A native woman, her French husband guide them,
Pilgrims follow, churches, schools, the Grange,
The day the mountains scream.

An ordinary day half a continent away,
Moses, Muhammed, Christ, Siddartha,
Confucius, take up their walking staffs,
Into the hills, into the valleys, into the
Poisoned wells of the most hardened
Hearts, the peoples walk with them,
The day the mountains scream.

An ordinary day half a continent away,
The eagle and the raven land on peaks
And city streets, Daedalus and Icarus
Strap on their wings and launch, they
Do not know if air shall carry them,
They only dare to feel it will some day,
The day the mountains scream.

The day the mountains scream
Is just an ordinary day, we wake,
We sleep, we work, we play, we
Dance, we scheme, we fight, we
Blame, we weep, we pray, we ask
Forgiveness, we forgive, we bless
An ordinary day half a continent away.

FISHERMAN'S KNOT

Lord, my hands tremble,
I must take off my glasses,
Hold the line to my eye
And twist three or four
Times. This space between
The loop, Lord, help me
Hold it here, grant me
Just a little more light
To thread the gap between
My thumb and forefinger,
Let me cinch my filament
To your swivel. Lord, I am
Complete, I hear the stream
Behind me continuing.

PTERODACTYL WINGS

Grandson wants you to make pterodactyl
Wings, so he can fly through blue bright waters,
Flouncing and gurgling, his digitals
Flaying the flanks of your would be wingspan.
Imported rivers, aren't they all? Through some
Aqueduct cut from the Colorado
Or the Rhone—3 ½ to 5 feet,
Depth of this enraptured precious desert
Perrier, \$2.89 per liter. We drink
And swim and watch Shrek
In this San Diego motel room, wondering
What American westerners can learn
Re-inventing old world ogres into their
Own image and likeness and what's for lunch?