

Rosmarie Waldrop

Two Poems

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ANALYSIS

When he sat down in season. When the street was in conspiracy against him. When he had nervous complaints for lack of effect.

When he felt thirsty and soon.

When his soul was eaten. When his body, for the purpose of unimaginable pleasure, was to be transformed into a woman's.

When he waited.

When in his dream he was to be abused. When the light incurable and bright advertising. When the dream satisfied the color red.

When he walked to the door to prepare behavior.

When dreams filled the older buildings. When their surface incorporated Indian trails, but not laughing.

When he bought three oranges. Pressed a key into his wife's hand. Was given the finger in a particular manner.

His childhood memories covered his lifetime.

IN THIS CITY

*I*n this city, she said, we do not like the heat. We wallow in sweat like sheets and display them in ecstasy.

In ecstasy, we touch the air with every pore. The air comes in color, she said, and flutters heroically.

In the buildings, she said, the sun breeds alarms. When it gets too crowded they may be used as maps.

In my mind, I arrange the dust atop the swollen moisture, she said. Pregnant with omens.

In this city, she said, we already live mostly underground.

In danger, she said, underground. And the consequences undreamed of.

In the inner city, there is invariably a house set on fire. To get rid of the tenants, she said. Who scatter in all directions.

In the old days, she said, it was easier to live above ground. And to communicate.

In our heart, we know we'll never leave, she said. If we leave we come back on a stretcher. We call it patriotism.

In the end, why don't we, she said, even want to talk here?