

THAT WORD

1

Give me the innermost
and youngest word
both the cherished
and the un-conceited
the (nearly) unsaid
that cloaked itself
or maybe not
the outermost
the ionic
the weightless

And the unwieldy word
the unwanted one
give me the gadfly
give me the word
that grows in march
and blooms midwinter
give me the
inversion
the tangle under the tongue
croaking in the throat
the cross word
give me that
give me that word

2

Give me the impetuous
and tenacious word
the reiteration that pays
no heed
give me the word
that breaks the sting
and buries the red rag
the one that
quells cancer
bridles the bull
quashes the blood clot
brushes aside every storm

And the soothing word
the unruffled
hair of the dog
that reins in urges
and paves a path
the word of goodwill
the one that
whispering between crags
and sighing through grass
strokes the cheek
supples the skin
stems the leak
the healing word
that warms the mouth
give me that
give me that word

3

Give me the steep
and straight word
give me the icicle in the ravine
and the summit
the spires and steeple
pining
for the sky
give me the pinnacle and sea stack
silhouetted against rising mist
the headland and rock tower
the ash and mast
and include geysers and eruptions
do not refuse me
pillars of fire and cloud
to light my way
by day
and
by night

And the tortuous
contortions
the crooked and hunched
give me the trees in the faroes
the gnarled bough
where whirls blow
creepers astray
give me the bowels large and small
give me the kinks in the chain dance
that break the ring and break it again
give me the entanglement
of both longline and brainwave
the ripple and eddy
give me alternating current
give me the drag on the net
pulling in opposite directions
give me waves chasing the wind
the centrifuge in the surf
give me that
give me that word

4

Give me the broad
and broadening word
where all hands are on deck
singing from the same hymn sheet
but marching to their own tune
give me the broad selection
the overflowing cornucopia
give me that famed wedding
where the whole village is invited (and attends)
give me sing-alongs
give me broad grins
soaring spirits (and small talk)
where there is always room
for one more (word)
give me the broad hips
the wide-open embrace
give me the unsuspecting word
whose sinker never hits the bottom
give me the village feast
where aquavit is served by the half-pint
give me the flour in the jar
that is never spent
give me that
give me that word

And give me the narrow
the narrowing word
let me have the
peculiar
the singular
give me the lone voice
(be it shrill or hoarse)
the peerless
the private
unfettered
sailing its own sea
teach me to walk the narrowing ledge
before it hides behind the knoll
let me revisit the meadow trail
teach me to be serene
in the pinched pressing passage
between old storehouses
give me also the word: the-narrow-path
give me the unique
the sporadic
and conceal not the exceptional
let me relish in the challenging

word
give me the fastidious
the rigorous
the unique word
the word that flowers
in all weather
give me that
give me that word

5

Give me the soft
the unsharpened
give me the feather and down
and rob me neither of chick nor child
or of newborn babe
give me the soft duvet
after a strenuous workday
the lamplight of my childhood
and the soft darkness
give me the pile of wool after spring shearing
slick seaweed in warm rockpools
and the soaked moss
hazy summer days we played in the river
give me offal in autumn
fresh cream and junket
and forget not that mousse in february of 59
but when all is said and at the end of the day
let it go
but give me
give me my mother's soft embrace
give me my father's soft gaze
give me a woman's soft bosom
give me the lovely word
give me that
give me that word

And teach me to use the hard one
and/or the sharp one
give me the hundredweight
bluestone basalt
give me lodes and seams in the landscape
let me have the walrus tusk
father brought home from greenland
and teach me to respect the diamond
serving sophus in his day to cut windowpanes
give me tempered steel
in trying times lend me a match for
the brand regin blacksmith made sigurd dragonslayer
and let me sometimes be rebuffed
like a blade slipping on tough horn
give me the timely marmoreal word
in auspicious setting
the fire-forged
and razor-edged
give me
give me that
give me that word