

Wind Chrysalid's Rattle

SAMPLE

Books by Gustaf Sobin

POETRY

Wind Chrysalid's Rattle (Montemora, New York, 1980)

Celebration of the Sound Through (Montemora, New York, 1982)

The Earth As Air (New Directions, New York, 1984)

Sicilian Miniatures (Cadmus Editions, San Francisco, 1986; privately distributed)

Voyaging Portraits (New Directions, New York, 1988)

Breath's Burials (New Directions, New York, 1995)

By the Bias of Sound: Selected Poems 1974–1994 (Talisman House, Jersey City, NJ, 1995)

Towards the Blanched Alphabets (Talisman House, Jersey City, NJ, 1998)

Articles of Light & Elation (Cadmus Editions, San Francisco, 1998)

In the Name of the Neither (Talisman House, Jersey City, NJ, 2002)

The Places as Preludes (Talisman House, Jersey City, NJ, 2005)

Collected Poems (Talisman House, Greenfield, MA, 2010)

FICTION

Venus Blue (Bloomsbury, London, 1991; Little, Brown, New York, 1992)

Dark Mirrors (Bloomsbury, London, 1992)

The Fly-Truffler (Bloomsbury, London, 1998; Norton, New York, 1999)

In Pursuit of a Vanishing Star (Norton, New York, 2002)

ESSAYS

Luminous Debris: Reflecting on Vestige in Provence and Languedoc (University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 1999)

Ladder of Shadows: Reflecting on Medieval Vestige in Provence and Languedoc (University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 2009)

Aura: Last Essays (Counterpath Press, Denver, CO, 2009)

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I.

Wind Chrysalid's Rattle

(1973)

... c'est que tout a été donné aux hommes,
dès l'origine, mais sous une forme mobile:
ils transportent avec eux, tout au long de
leur migration, la totalité de ce qui doit
être créé.

—Lucien Sebag

SAMPLER

DOMINION

not light.

not even the seeds of light. but its black humus,
its dampness dreaming through the flesh,

the breath still numb, its shimmering globe still
wordless, imminent: an opal

of trolling falcons!

SAMPLER

SIGNS

what matters is what the shadow says;
is reading the cloud, and the spastic drift
of dragonflies
over the glass-headed meadow.

is earth, its ciphers. its membrane of sounds.
is one's life risked, a miracle
within a lizard's eyes!

SAMPLE

ISN'T THAT'S ALMOST

isn't

that's almost (its vastness, infinitesimal: a glint
in the voice's wondrous shadows). *isn't*

that dreams itself: the translucent herd of its
kisses driven, ineluctable, the

earth germinal driven into the absence that *is*.

SAMPLER

THAT THE UNIVERSE IS CHRYSALID

(Blake's Birthday)

That the universe is chrysalid.

That all things that are, are continuous emanations.

That their being is a perpetual becoming.

That becoming is the breath of lust. And that lust is perfection.

That all increments are equal.

The spore is the clavicord of the tree.

The clavicord is lust.

That in creating we extend the very energy that creates us.

That this extension is space.

That space, the space we move through, and dwell in, is made up of
the infinitesimal crystals that we murmur.

Music hears.

That creation is momentum made perceptible.

The attempt to store or isolate momentum is tyranny.

Not sequence, but elaboration.

That genesis is a wind.

The rock ripples; the night swims.

That the eyes are forever swifter than their green mirrors.

That structure is shadow.

That music should catch fire and flame into gesture, motion, deed.

That the past hasn't yet happened.

That only the edge is dominion.

Only the edge secretes.

That our lust is lightness. Acceleration.

And what we call the 'stillness' is the inconceivable velocity of our
flesh, thinking in the same space-cadence as the universe.

The thrust of a single whisper.

The lymph, the lightning!

That life, in its ecstatic throes, touches the resplendence of death.

That the senses shall iridesce into their infinite sensations.

That we become, ultimately, the space we've created.

Blossoming generatrix, and genius of our every breath.

HELIX

Liquid, the dawn's
green axe.

The sheer agility of wrists,
calves,
of the eyes swimming
into the earth's
first clouds.

Why wait?
What holds?
The breath sprouts,
sprouts flutes,
the horn's spiralling glass.

Villages rise
in wheels of rich dust,
while a creature
begs for herself,
buoyed
in the glittering arms of her voice.

THE TURBAN

what is writes itself. the mauve-gold claws
of the honeysuckle

make perfect cantatas.

what isn't except in its black incipience
is breath: breath reaching
into the thick globe

of its whispers (its seed wrought
with the wisdom of an ultimate resonance);
is muscle flowering into muscle;
is hair, shuddering like a liquid
into its vacuum of light;
is light, itself, flooding the stars

earth, asleep, in the music of its spores,
earth, asleep, in the music of its spores,
the body is blown through the tongue

into a perfect turban of bees and deep thunder.

HYMN: FOR THE SERPENT

the hardest: *seeing* the *black quartz* burn
in each creature each thing,
the saint's task, living
its illumination, and never making it one's own,
appropriating, or expelling it into myth:
another's. but to gut the shadows

in the deep canyon. to release the serpent,

seeing not the scales in their quick glitter,
but the *flame*: the black immaculate light
it's made of, and moves in, and *is*. *creation*

winding chemically through its creature.

separate not caged in the senses
the cold prejudice of sight (the universe
twisted to the perspective of self)

but the chord, echoing in the clear flesh,
the *flame*, its resonance, incarnate,
ringing in each, separate,

nobody's light but the splendor's in each
that each *sees* (*echoing*, naked) in the other.

*