



What Is Poetry

Sure, it's no strategy for survival,
nothing to live on. Your obstinacy is laughable
as you recall the enchanted lakes,
the rustling woods and hushed caverns
where a voice echoes out vividly, surely for centuries.
Sibyls? What matters is leaves, then maybe the rhyme
of voice and choice, since voices press against the world,
and choice is that which does not entrust names
to leaves. Just you try to catch them! Try
to touch the ground and fly farther,
like a flat stone over water—how many times?
Five, twelve? A sequence of poems and reflections,
a sequence of leaves, and anyway all the stones and leaves
lie one atop the other according to an ancient order,
their forms unclear. Then there's the cavern,
or the teeny room. But that gust!
The draft as you open the door, and the wind
disperses the leaves, and the world rears up,
and the words come like a sprinkling of confetti.
But don't give us the stinkeye, don't head out
a sourpuss, not yet. No need to regret the delay,
for perhaps it will sing? Maybe it will suddenly say
what people and wars are like, travels and travails,
how things stand, what news?

Founding of a Different Colony

And we'll have to furnish them with news
media, enigmatic surveys, reports
on the number of steps the ballerina took
at the casting call, and ethereal shots
of Antarctic snow, a flash of butterfly
wings in the mist of an Andean waterfall,
non-stop, live, and without commentary.
And the same old station breaks. And quality?
Has the art of dying gone out of style?
No initials. Those who don't like it are free
to pass single-file through foreign territory,
seeking adventures not on the schedule.