

Twilight

There's a black bear
in the apple tree
and he won't come down.
I can hear him panting,
like an athlete.
I can smell the stink
of his body.

Come down, black bear.
Can you hear me?

The mind is the most interesting thing to me;
like the sudden death of the sun,
it seems implausible that darkness will swallow it
or that anything is lost forever there,
like a black bear in a fruit tree,
gulping up sour apples
with dry sucking sounds,

or like us at the pier, somber and tired,
making food from sunlight,
you saying a word, me saying a word, trying hard,
though things were disintegrating.

Still, I wanted you,
your lips on my neck,
your postmodern sexuality.
Forlorn and anonymous:
I didn't want to be that. I could hear
the great barking monsters of the lower waters
calling me forward.

You see, my mind takes me far,
but my heart dreams of return.
Black bear,
with pale-pink tongue
at the centre of his face,
is turning his head,
like the face of Christ from life.
Shaking the apple boughs,
he is stronger than I am
and seems so free of passion—
no fear, no pain, no tenderness. I want to be that.

Come down, black bear.
I want to learn the faith of the indifferent.

Henri Cole