



Flying through a Hole in the Storm

Fleda Brown

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It is easy to forget that only the rarest of people have something interesting to say about themselves. But Fleda Brown proves a mesmerizing exception—anything she cares to share is manna for our deepest needs. Brown is the author of thirteen collections, and in her prizepoeting role, she has won Pushcart, Felix Pollak, and Philip Levine prizes.

Dear Frida Kahlo

Re: Self-Portrait

I see you, what you want: the world inside out, framed, a ceremony of sealing the door. Like Julian of Norwich in her nine-by-eleven cell, flint walls, dirt floor covered with aromatic leaves and rushes. So close to dying while alive, so everlastingly straight-on. Looking at you looking at me, Frida, is like dying. It is like gathering the taut men we've loved while our bodies broke, our hearts broke, gathering them to a mutual stillness. I half wish you would let me let go, let go of me with your colors, your shadow mustache, your bleeding soul. I have suffered enough, myself. I am okay here, now. Let us leave issues of the soul to Julian. Let God take her below her prayers to the tender core where the trembling gates stand open. Let her squeeze down into a lozenge of herself someone could take and feel better, throat and nose opened, a hint of eucalyptus. You and I, God help us, do not wish to be cured.

MATT SUTHERLAND (March / April 2021)

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