

(see us silhouetting
the wall and filling the window,
making predictions)

we think with
the voices of crows
we are watching hopeless trees
with hard yellow eyes

(we are making sunlight
we are melting the snow)

-- Joyce Odam

Sacramento CA

PORTRAIT NR. 31

the teaspoons are electrified today
there is strychnine in the coffee
the cakes have a tinge
of sudden death

the sofa springs are asymmetric
and insanely provided with
land mines by each plate
a piece of plastic marzipan entices

already the doorbell smoulders
suspiciously and the doormat
coughs with static electricity
in the wc bowl an alligator gargles

the small glasses and the vitriol carafe
are set out the invitations
sent off lovingly signed with
explosive pencil

soon our girlfriends will arrive

TO LOVE

Denmark's number one swinger --
that's me now, definitely.
13,800 streetlights in Copenhagen and
Fredericksberg
are witness now of my eternal, undying
patented love

to the woman whom I unblushingly call
my young love
and kiss with the energy of a beetcrusher.

No one awards us a trophy
for our endless evenings' odysseys
with our marathon love.
And our intertwined fingers
are as complicated as birds' nests.

We take terrific pains with everything.
It's a question of loving correctly.
Everyone seems to know how it's done.
We strive energetically to learn.

Saying goodbye takes three hours
and morning comes riding a streetcar
from Lower Fasan Way
and gathers me up into a merciful slumber
after the test of strength.

-- Klaus Rifbjerg

Translated from the Danish by:
Nadia Christensen and
Alexander Taylor

NEW JERSEY THE PINE BARRENS

1. moss in the wet cedar
i go into the woods
most every day with
a bowbar cut down
dead branches i look
70 but i'm really 86
sometimes standing in
the floating bed in
the cranberries i think
how the city's grown
close they think
in the bogs here we
all have pointy ears
pine snakes in the
dark green mink deer
otter raccoon milk
snakes corn snakes
catfish rare tree
frogs that sound like
a state trooper you
can't find them any
where but here