

CHASE TWICHELL

## Sayonara Marijuana Mon Amour

In the mornings black tea uplifts me,  
and at night I invite wine to tell  
its stories in my mouth. If I nap,  
a different mind awakes than the one  
that lay down and dreamed of swimming.  
Both dreaming and swimming alter consciousness.  
So do zazen, weeding, and sex.  
Marijuana makes me self-  
and unself-conscious simultaneously,  
like playing with dogs.

The first time I got high, we gathered  
at the monument in East Rock Park.  
I read the plaque to the Union Dead.  
Moving from one mind to another  
was familiar to me, as was the sensation  
of watching myself, as if the dead and I  
were the audience, and my friends  
were real, and in the world.  
(As a kid I believed that the dead  
lay inside the monuments,  
that each monument was a tomb,  
proof of death one old stone wall away,  
the same distance as the friends.)

Whatever it is in me that was born striving  
was also born craving and clinging.  
Once, when I'd drunk too much wine,  
the dogs and I stood in the snowy yard,  
their wet black nostrils working,  
drawing-in scents from a realm  
unknown to me. I looked up at the great  
dust-light of stars, and there was my question  
spelled out for me, in plain sight.  
But whose question was it?

I must not want to be fully enlightened,  
since I do not devote myself entirely to it.  
I like distraction. Whenever I'm distracted,  
a new room appears for my perusal,  
or an ocean, or a neighborhood lit  
by childhood's untrustworthy flashlights,  
half dreamed-up, half memory.  
Or lit by the alpenglow or northern lights,  
under the constellation Not Here Not Now,  
where I have wasted most of my life.

I often berate myself, renew my vows,  
forsake all toys, recite the Gatha of Atonement.  
I pledge austerity; I scorn squander.  
*No* (imaginary teacher talking), *that misses it.*  
*Toys are neither right nor wrong.*

When I wonder which of these nights  
will be the night I renounce it,  
the spank in the intake surprises me again,  
and I return its resinous kiss.  
It tastes of every mouth that ever  
stopped kissing me to ask me  
what consciousness was (very few,  
but those are the ones I remember).