

## Cockburn Bruce

### "Understanding Nothing 425"

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high above valley  
above deep shade coloured with the calls of cuckoos,  
the ring of coppersmith's hammer...  
high in the hiss of the wind,  
wind filled with spirits  
and bright with the jangle of horse bells...  
after a crisp night crammed with stars  
it's morning.

Over the scratched-up soil, scorched-earth wasted,  
long shadows lead women bearing water.  
I watch the sway of skirts,  
think of moist spice forests --

too many pictures  
swirling  
vertigo  
momentum of civilization  
threw me too far over this time-simple landscape  
and i hang here  
in this mountain light  
a balloon blown full of darkness --  
got to let this ballast go  
got to float upward  
till i burst

weavers' fingers flying on the loom  
patterns shift too fast to be discerned  
all these years of thinking  
ended up like this  
in front of all this beauty  
understanding nothing.

rhododendrons in bloom, sharp against spring snow  
remind me of another time  
in japanese temple --  
there was a single  
orange blossom  
at the wrong time of year --  
seemed like a sign --  
when i looked again

it was gone.

weavers' fingers flying on the loom  
patterns shift too fast to be discerned  
all these years of thinking  
ended up like this  
in front of all this beauty  
understanding nothing. (Toronto, October 26, 1987.)

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