

MICHAEL LAVERS

## All This Fiddle

Tonight, even the frogs  
are out there, discoursing to darkness,  
regurgitating air, getting it said.  
They too are turning the embarrassing  
necessities of flesh into a kind of music,  
they too are instruments of the invisible,  
some unpleased power that would settle  
for limp skin just to preserve itself.  
I feel like telling you about the woman  
with the parasol, the way her small black dog  
kept tugging toward the park. About the rain,  
the desert-scented dust-soaked rain that fell  
across the valley like a dirty window  
that the clouds suddenly closed. There's more,  
a thought that hung there like the smell of lightning,  
and that made my hair crackle and fizz.  
But maybe what the frogs don't know  
is that if you can say it then it isn't real,  
that the trick is learning how to live  
so you are worthy of the mind's best silences,  
the terrifying static of its being there.

# Pensées

Man is a thinking reed says Blaise Pascal.  
The wind comes, and we quiver with ideas,  
the idea that willows look best when disturbed,  
that the chives we can smell from the garden  
will go with the salmon hauled only this morning  
to shore. I see cows in the field next door  
start to gather behind their escarpment of elms,  
and think maybe the bins should be put in the shed,  
the glass table tied down, that my failure  
to have someone cut back the pine bough  
that hovers suggestively over the roof  
was an error not so much of sloth but contentment,  
of being too pleased with the world as it is,  
its indulgence to poets, its gardens, its chairs.  
There has been sadness, of course, and despair;  
some that I loved are now dead, and dead young.  
But mostly my knowledge of pain was imagined,  
my suffering shadow, my joy a white flame,  
the idea that the bins will be fine where they are,  
that the clouds coming our way will swerve,  
but if not, that we'll wake up tomorrow and eat,  
unsurprised that the milk is still cold, the eggs  
still intact, that our wishes were kernel, not chaff,  
that the damage, though real, wasn't worse.