



rimertown

an atlas

poems

laura walker

rimertown

an atlas

NEW CALIFORNIA POETRY

Edited by Robert Hass, Calvin Bedient,
Brenda Hillman, and Forrest Gander

For, by Carol Snow
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Selected Poems, by Fanny Howe
Sleeping with the Dictionary, by Harryette Mullen
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rimertown / an atlas, by Laura Walker
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Laura Walker



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for daddy lou and mama ruth

who brought us there

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canticle for rimertown

*as if a pond
as if a letter*

*gravelly
interstices, a judgment
that all will be*

butternut squash, poor chickens

*lint and return
i am lidded i am wake*

girl on a rockinghorse

*(tuesdays were for pulling)
location. primacy of place*

*(bless your heart)
water kept (where all night)
flowing*

*and scattered seed with a single throw
(her pillow) scattered there*

*as if a cant
as if a leaden soldier*

*discovered all at once
later in the sawdust*

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map 42

cast
against shape and shore
(she) meanders slowly
a little leg
letting in the light

(praise her praise

that in falling off the edge
sinewy and stiff, lines merging
we come back to idea
parchment

and that once was. huddled by a church not built. we are, in its shadows
and with another turn a spire. rises deep shadow and the graveyard. will
be the marker

birds falling out of their nests

asphalt opening up, heat against our heels

at the top of the hill, and below. the line between lake and pond, and private
anyway: there at the end of the foxes' road. that down we would swoop

we stood and caught them as they fell

mountain ash carried starkly through woods. left out on the porch
overnight. arms torn in cinders, they were mountain people. it
couldn't have stood all night, that's memory playing. fog playing.
they carried him backwards to fool the devil, lowered him just as
they said they were. someone singing the other side of the church.
shedevil. come a little closer and croon that one to me

map 17

cull call

a cardinal in the yard. bent to rights over water
to learn the song of a mockingbird, brittle white
litmus over time
bring lime from water
shallow, welt streams

told not to dive
a foot a sleep
bachelor buttons lining the field
we knew him to come running. thirst, the oven left on
we knew her to bring water
a sudden leap to silt

they built in the adjacent field

map 23

birds lifted suddenly
by their wings
as if in flight
might retake

gravel. purple edges
lace white thorns
what is propelled across water

strike

as in

(she held herself still with a stick

as if to say)

there were hundreds of brown dresses floating among crows
and before that
numerous tiny birches,
waving

i have four dollars and a paper spill

i have not yet called out to you

it came across a browner field, solid, like a soldier

story (clay)

brought red cloth down from the mountain

(frayed) it spread

brick algebra allege

a line of thin white soldiers

him leaning in sawdust. shadows swiftly across, a
color green. avenues the time we. from underneath
dripped skirt. played with language and made it
(they) built rough. like (black deer drop through
pastures) lined, a (revue, county fair, added to stock)
(flour and simultaneously) georgette

wanted green and got a town

(laid down and risen again) the bride pedaling her bicycle (avenues. apparition.
ten notions met at the fork in the creek, climb up to touch the bank)

she left her clothes folded neatly on the pier. jumped in and let the current take her,
buick parked where they always parked, purse under the seat

muscadine vine and the smell of paraffin. she worked hard around her shrubs, scrip and scrap. taught her daughters to sew. we called her gorgeous but of course she didn't like that. vines came crawling back, a letter on her leg. they say the army was more romantic then. pulled into the drive, saw the empty window as he came. her name meaning theatrical, theater, stagelight. never saw him look so mean, something waving on his arm

snapdragon throated as if she too. taut. i will chuck you under the chin, i will lay you down to sleep, earlygirl it's morning. she always knew someday she'd hear that song. morning towing heralds in the birds. keep this comb for me, little dragonweed flower. come back and i will meet you. here by the side of the road. dirt dug in holes and the water leaning

cornflowers towing the field, fences radiating inertia. i could take
you back but the wire would still be torn. lean down here, pull
your back in behind you. stuffed into caps and rivulets, a boy
could drown and his mother, here. carry me. she told you when
you sneeze to say you sneezed. i taught you that. she wears the blue
as if she's the only one, creek a ruined eye

lined up the whiskey bottles and shot them down. right after. came home from church and shot those bottles down. one right after the other. and her in the kitchen with her elbows cold in flour

story (wed)

wraps her hands in (tourniquet) swam she is breaking she (time).

by the back porch while the wasps crawl. tender wings

last light a missing page

when the (girl) met the (pony) and gave it apples.
right from the palm of her hand. sugar in the creases,
foot swept summer. heat. brim through

paint stuck the porch to the (batting) (home)

summer cough the smell of (lemon) brass

carry, the signs of soldiers

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