

MANDORLA

NUEVA ESCRITURA DE LAS AMÉRICAS • NEW WRITING FROM THE AMERICAS

Excerpt/Fragmento from *Mandorla*, Issue 7

JAY WRIGHT

ELEVEN POEMS & A PLAY

Seamus knew the shape
of an absolute past.
Think of that Aramaic word,
sitting like a siskin
 in early snow.
God forgive the man
his arrogance, his blasphemy,
 or his anxiety.
What should he show,
if not the endless
 opening of fields,
where his presence
was an offense to other
birds sitting at Vespers?
One hears
the version of an Egyptian
secretary,
who, borrowing the black
and white inscription
 of a desert domain,
felt the bone order,
the logical fragility of a
 caterpillar
in an abandoned garden.

∞

If coral could speak to me,
my gift would be forgiven.
Take this as a cunning
state of affairs,
whatever is made possible
 by grace alone,
say, that suffering
occasioned by exhilaration,
a corrupted intention
 that does not fit.
Why should I bother

to match the great order of nature,
or feel compelled
to live
in the geometric
contradiction some lily intends?
There is a moment
when that brief red motion
leaves the deep water
for air.