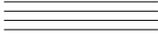


F R O M T H E C L I N I C A T
C O E U R D ' A L E N E



H E N R Y S L O S S

i.

My “ally” here (“nurse” is discouraged)
downplays our differences – “Everyone
has issues.” Hers leave the facility
however at five. An English major
before getting her LPC from Idaho
(“I love Moscow, but for a true Phoenician
A-Zee’s home”), she notes the “poetic effects”
to my self-conceptions, their “theatricality.”
“But, darling, what if that is me?”

(“Darling” is discouraged too).

ii.

Countless in number and kind,
and growing at astonishingly
acute angles to the steep
terrain above the lake,
evergreens rise. A few,
fallen, point straight down,
their needles brittle brown.

Admiration and dismay
fail at the light-hearted
sensitivity

of aspen to the slightest
 breeze, to sunlight itself,
 and to the seasons, change —
 O moved, untroubled tree!

iii.

At uncertain intervals
 meant I suppose to
 keep us on our toes,
 even as we lose our feet
 in the psyche's surf,
 "Solitary" excursions
 are encouraged, though we know
 we're never alone, tracked
 like animals by
 infallible devices.

Even had one a mind to
 there's no escaping the mind,
 no getting anywhere but
 back along waxed corridors
 to the smirched self's command center.

iv.

Say they "found" me face down,
 tripped up by the ankle-high
 barbed wire fence around
 an old farmhouse, its roof too
 collapsed, ripe prunes spilling
 from my hands. The fruit
 laden limbs of the tree
 appealed to me.

Inviting me to eat one
 after another, an aching
 bellyful, to taste
 for the turning
 of sour to sweet.

v.

Pleasure domes dot
 the shores, pleasure
 craft ply the waters. Golf
 balls fly to the Black Rock's
 painstakingly-maintained
 fairways & greens
 on a hilltop sheared
 of forest. Still moose
 appear. Deer.

It's open season on the poor
 in spirit.

Hope is mistaken.

vi.

She won't have it, of course —
 young, dogmatic
 in her refusal to believe
 anything true that's too
 depressing.

"Sorry, darling. I'll go
 quietly."

Who needs me?

vii.

Evergreens so they can soar,
the lapping of lake water
bore. Blue sky be
merciless.