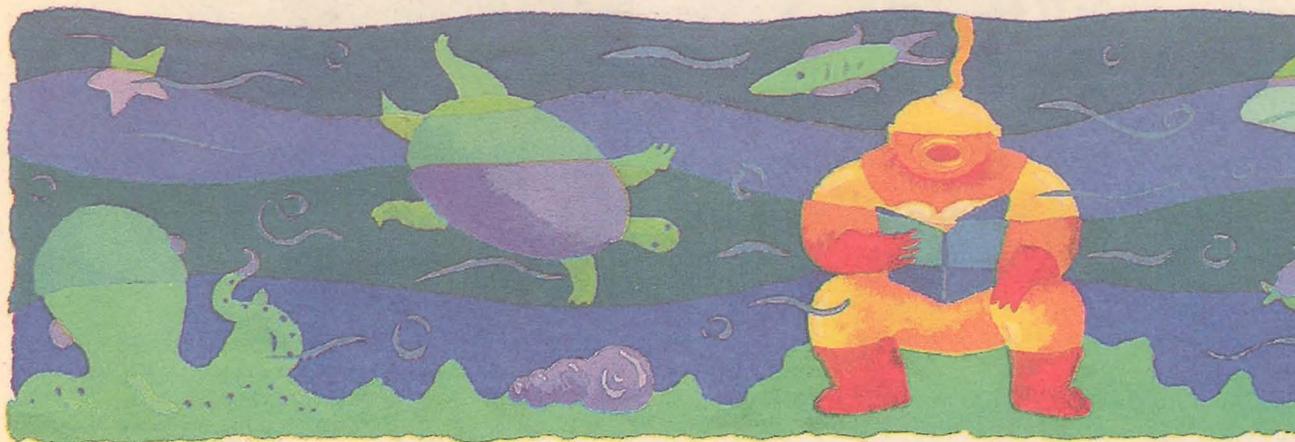


# A Very Short Anthology of



## The Waterfall

*Orb-weaver shivering  
among the filaments: how many  
fibers generated from within  
transect the air?*

*How many hirsute, sightless  
gropings anchor  
these redwood trees, suffuse  
the flowery tracteries*

*of the oxtails? The veining  
in this hand, these  
eyeballs, the circuitous  
and scintillating*

*leap within the brain —  
the synapse,  
the waterfall, the black-  
thread mane of fern*

*beside it — all, all  
suspend, here:  
everywhere, existences  
hang by a hair*

— Amy Clampitt

From "The Collected Poems" (Alfred A. Knopf)

## My Fly

for Erving Goffman, 1922-1982

*One of those great, garishly emerald flies that al-  
ways look freshly generated from fresh excre-  
ment  
and who maneuver through our airspace with a  
deft intentionality that makes them seem to  
think,  
materializes just above my desk, then vanishes,  
his dense, abrasive buzz sucked in after him.*

*I wait, imagine him, hidden somewhere, waiting,  
too, then think, who knows why, of you —  
don't laugh — that he's a messenger from you, or  
that you yourself (you'd howl at this),  
ten years afterwards have let yourself be incar-  
nated as this pestering anti-angel.*

*Now he, or you, abruptly reappears, with a  
weightless pounce alighting near my hand.*

Elizabeth Schmidt, who chose this anthology of re-  
cently published poems, is an editor at Open City.

*I lean down close, and though he has to sense my  
looming presence, he patiently attends,  
as though my study of him had become an ele-  
ment of his own observations — maybe it is  
you!*

*Joy! To be together, even for a time! Yes, tilt  
your fuselage, turn it towards the light,  
aim the thousand lenses of your eyes back up at  
me; how I've missed the layers of your atten-  
tion,  
how often been bereft without your gift for sniff-  
ing out pretentiousness and moral sham.*

*Why would you come back, though? Was that oth-  
er radiance not intricate enough to parse?  
Did you find yourself in some monotonous centu-  
ry hovering down the tidy queue of creatures  
waiting to experience again the eternally unlikely  
bliss of being matter and extension?*

*You lift, you land — you're rushed, I know; the in-  
terval in all our terminals is much too short.  
Now you hurl against the window, skid and jitter  
on the pane: I open it and step aside  
and follow for one final moment of felicity your  
brilliant ardent atom swerving through.*

— C. K. Williams

From "The Vigil" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)

## Cameo Appearance

*I had a small, nonspeaking part  
In a bloody epic. I was one of the  
Bombed and fleeing humanity.  
In the distance our great leader  
Crowded like a rooster from a balcony,  
Or was it a great actor  
Impersonating our great leader?*

*That's me there, I said to the kiddies.  
I'm squeezed between the man  
With two bandaged hands raised  
And the old woman with her mouth open  
As if she were showing us a tooth*

*That hurts badly. The hundred times  
I rewound the tape, not once  
Could they catch sight of me  
In that huge gray crowd.  
That was like any other gray crowd.*

*Trot off to bed, I said finally  
I know I was there. One take*

