

# EYE



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poems by  
**William Bridges**

Eye  
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## A Problem of Art

Once when I was a small child I painted  
a watercolor landscape, green to the flat  
horizon, then an azure sky--  
halves of pure color. Everyone laughed  
and gave it names, like "Summer Pasture  
Just After the Cows Have Gone Over the Hill."  
I didn't mind, knowing my work would last,  
and that the critics, though dim, were not unkind.  
I think that was the high point of my career  
in art. Complexities multiplied  
from then on. I have been trying bit by bit  
to get back to that purity of line  
and color, but I cannot simplify  
enough. Those cows keep getting into it.

## Snowmelt

A warm day leaves only  
dirty peninsulas  
that rot bottom up.

Detail revives. A leaf  
skitters on brown grass,  
sticks sail in gutters,  
floodwater hangs and flashes  
over the Conrail tracks.

No more white wideness,  
just the beautiful  
specificity of the world.

## Artifacts

This is the hour of the yard's  
deep space, when objects  
come into their own:  
the blue ball abandoned  
next to the fence,  
chairs in a semicircle  
taking tea, a toy firetruck  
dripping with darkness.  
And there are other things here,  
some evident  
as last night's bread  
in its cellophane, some faint  
as radio signals from the Cenozoic—  
postcards in French  
from Siberia, some lines  
scratched on bark:  
“Leg broken, send help.”  
Whispers from Voyager  
this morning. Jamestown  
has been discovered  
but it wasn't lost,  
except for a little while,  
except to us.

# Eye

If this window were a seascape,  
the red car in the middle distance  
would be a ship hanging  
halfway up a gray wall of water.  
I pick up “eye” and carry it around.  
It turns when I do, bends,  
gets up and down, looks  
under, over, and inside things.  
It is attached to “brain,”  
which can be fooled. Last night I walked  
behind a man who was walking faster  
down Walnut Street. He shrank  
until he was the same size  
as television people,  
then disappeared in the end  
of a green tunnel. Eye,  
how shall I be well  
and artfully deceived today?

## And Suddenly Flowers

Coming down fast off the interstate,  
I brake on the ramp, and suddenly flowers  
are everywhere, blue and white:  
chicory, Queen Anne's Lace  
flood over the pavement.  
The car rocks a moment,  
steams, falls quietly apart.  
I want to jump up, shout,  
start running into the flowers  
that stretch farther into the future  
than I can imagine.



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