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Heaven

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Heaven

"I know a woman who makes heaven
out of her body."

-Jack Gilbert

I.

Inner beauty is, of course, selfless.
Its greatest curse. My friend found
a bat in the house last week,
flitting from one end of the hall
to the other, its chirps panicked,
cries like a vagrant waking
in a dumpster being lifted to the truck.
It came in a window. My friend's girls
chased it, unable to resist the pull
of horror, screaming. Panting,
hair in a wild flash, one called out,
"Get out! Fly away! Die!"

II.

What brought you to this desolate place,
O wise one? Night's faithful sweeper,
long blind, you look almost feeble

under electric light. We have no pests
to offer you, just a long treeless tunnel
and the flailing arms of your worshippers.

III.

The woman who makes heaven
out of her body fills my dreams.
Poor thing! Long sought, men chasing
her endlessly, missing all they pass.
And she is left to judge the souls
who come to her window, lonely
with her dazzling offerings.

IV.

Girls, scoop up that winged baby
and hear its last hushed breaths.
I'm outside the window, under the beeches.

Pass me your little one and I'll scrape up
some earth here, all I could ever do.
Weep with me. Look at what awaits you.

--Chris Million '02