

Things Happen

Emma Lou Thayne

I

Things happen. Early in the world you travel into them. One day
You rise without prayer in a far camp and silently hurry away.
Having slept under stars and still breathing the greyed fire,
Who would take time to suppose this the middle of a lifetime?
You whisper kisses to those left flowering, a big hand, a small foot
uncovered.

You travel the sleepy gullies, come out of the mountains laughing:
Because it is morning and you and that son have places to go,
Even the heartless freeway is acceptable, having an end.
His traveling is dextrous, fast, like you used to ski,
You reading to him from the new owner's manual of how.

II

Things happen. A crash like a shot, your hand full of blood
From temple and eye, the split second. Speed ramming steel
Into your newly spent lifetime the blanks of bewildered abruption.
Not in on what was before you, gone the luxury of seeing, of choice.
From the highway, through the windshield the splatters of morning.
Smashed to floating that side of your face, what it held.
Instant the clouds, the passages saying You hear me?
Another place, a distant light, a flower in wind, you echoing Why?
Spilled questions wrenching your temple and eye to strenuous focus:
A dark navigable by caress and whisper. A stillness.

EMMA LOU THAYNE lives in Salt Lake City, has ten books published, the latest *As for Me and My House* (essays and poems); is mother to five daughters, on the Board of Directors of the *Deseret News*; is read regularly in Church and regional publications; and 40,000 copies of her peace poems *How Much for the Earth?* will be published in Russian in Kiev, USSR whenever glasnost says it is time.

III

Things happen. As a writer you imagined yourself inside another,
Slowly connections emerging from disconnections. Now
Through pain you travel painlessly by a new Manual of How.
That son, a surgeon, turns hazard lights on, goes ninety to emergency.
“Impossible.” Patrolmen, doctors, reporters heft the six-pound shaft.
To you nothing here is immediate, crucial, in the least attractive.
No expecting beyond hours of X-rays, stitches, shots, ice.
All that time returning, you vague about familiar hands,
Tangled in your head, the blow to trace, surely someone else’s story.
Approaching landmarks like on a curve seeing where you’ve been,
Things happen by the light of a new Manual of How.