

I see the petals rimmed with fire
The wide leaf spread, the calyx gleam
All the lilies of desire
Floating on your dream no dream

GENEALOGY IN A TREE TOP

Gerald N. White

Lodged in their unfinished symphony of growth,
confined like notes in an unborn manuscript,
the unhatched bubbles of sound stir restlessly
in their home-made incubator of mud and leaf.

To the parent robins I have donated my backyard elm
and the sanctity of a delivery room twelve branches high
where the calcium shells of melody can explode in song
from beneath the maternal warmth of down and feather.

As infant vibration swells into adult rhapsody
this garden will become a testing ground; this earth a larder;
this window-sill an auditioning stage; this receptive heart
a filled-to-capacity auditorium for each recital.

These fragile minstrels will attempt no innovation,
nor intricate rhythm to trick the tone-deaf ear,
nor factory-coated capsule of banality from
some assembly-line production of retarded hits.

No hit parade can chart their great inheritance,
for harmony is life, and songs are memories;
the songsters may be new, but their tunes are set
like melodic residue on the scales of time.