

THE STORK

There is always some thug or sniveling little pander
Who waits around to tell you who you are or where you came from—
Looked at in some eyes, each of us comes close to having been
a great mistake or blunder.

Not just us but any handsome little world that we contrive—
There we are still being swung through the air by the suave and sunny
stork
When several rapid bullet-like remarks hit him in the breast
and down we dive.

It is the old chimney act, but now, quite helpless, and for real—
There is the chute of lustrous, sun-preened feathers unable
to manage their tender cargo,
And birth is quite a new and sickening way to feel.

Much as after a disconcerting, madly plunging, act of sex,
recovering some balance,
One tries to stop the fall, right and steady the lovely, lissom stork,
But finds, in the soot-smudged squeeze, irreparable damage done
to that romance.

We learn to be more careful about sex, sorrow, laughter, the
unselfconscious act,
In moments of despair, let the brilliant bird go awful-winged and black,
Swooping down, only all too well, with the huge, meaty, wriggling
burden of pure fact.

Still, such is the dreaming beauty of the soul, it tries
Its old ascents and gentlest deliveries, over and over, beside
That little man going down in the swift elevator with the crushed
bird and child who quickly shut their eyes.

— Charles Edward Eaton