The Moth’s Serenade  from Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices by Paul Fleischman

Porch light, hear my plight! I drink your light like nectar
Dream of your by day Gaze in your eyes
all night Porch light!

Porch light! Bright paradise!

I am your seeking circling sighing lovesick knight
You are You are my soul’s desire my prize my eye’s
Porch light! Porch light! My shining star!

My compass needle’s North!

“Keep back,” they say “Keep back,” they say
I can’t!

“Don’t touch,” they say “Don’t touch,” they say
I must!

Porch light! Porch light!
Let’s clasp Let’s kiss
Let’s kiss Let’s clasp
Grasshoppers  from Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices by Paul Fleischman

Sap’s rising

Ground’s warming

Grasshoppers are

Grasshoppers are

hatching out

hatching out

Autumn-laid eggs

splitting

Young stepping

into spring

Grasshoppers

Grasshoppers

hopping

hopping

high

Grassjumpers

Grassjumpers

jumping

jumping

far

Vaulting from

leaf to leaf

stem to stem

plant to plant

Grass-

bounders

bounders

Grass-
springers

springers

Grass-
s soarers

soarers

Leapfrogging

Leapfrogging

longjumping

longjumping

Grasshoppers.

Grasshoppers.
Fireflies  from Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices by Paul Fleischman

Light
Light
is the ink we use

Night
Night
is our parchment

We’re
fireflies

fireflies
flickering

flitting
flashing

fireflies
glimmering

fireflies
gleaming

glowing

Insect calligraphers
Insect calligraphers
practicing penmanship
copying sentences

Six-legged scribblers
Six-legged scribblers
of vanishing messages
fleeting graffiti

Fine artists of flight
Fine artists of flight
adding dabs of light
bright brush strokes

Signing the June nights
Signing the June nights
as if they were paintings
as if they were painings

We’re
flickering
fireflies
flickering

fireflies.
fireflies.
Cicadas from Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices by Paul Fleischman

Afternoon, mid-August

Two cicadas singing
Air kiln-hot, lead heavy
Five cicadas humming
Thunderheads northwestward
Twelve cicadas buzzing
Up and down the street

the mighty choir’s assembling
Shrill cicadas droning
in the elms

Three years
spent underground
in darkness
Now they’re breaking ground
and climbing up the tree trunks
splitting skins and singing
Jubilant rejoicing
cicadas pouring out their fervent praise
for heat and light their hymn sung to the sun
Cicadas Cicadas
Whining

whining ci-
Being a bee  Being a bee  Then I pack combs with
is a joy.  is a pain.  pollen — not my idea of fun.

I’m a queen  When I’ve done
I’m a queen

I’ll gladly explain.  I’ll gladly explain.  Then, weary, I strive
Upon rising, I’m fed  to patch up any cracks
by my royal attendants,  in the hive.

I’m up at dawn, guarding  For the rest of the day.
the hive’s narrow entrance

I’m bathed

then I take out

the hive’s morning trash

then I’m groomed.

then I put in an hour

making wax,

without two minutes’ time

to sit still and relax.

Then I might collect nectar
from the field
three miles north

I lay eggs,
or perhaps I’m on
larva detail

by the hundred.

feeding the grubs
in their cells,
wishing that I were still
helpless and pale.

I’m loved and I’m lauded,
I’m outranked by none.

Truly, a bee’s is the
worst
of all lives.

Truly a bee’s is the
best
of all lives.
We don’t live in meadows  We don’t live in meadows  We don’t live in meadows  
crick-et  crick-et  crick-et  
or in groves

We’re house crickets  We’re house crickets  We’re house crickets  
living beneath  living beneath  living beneath
this gas stove

No matter the month  No matter the month  No matter the month
we stay well fed and warm  we stay well fed and warm  we stay well fed and warm

unconcerned about cold fronts and wind chill and storms.  For while others are ruled  For while others are ruled

whose varying height  whose varying height  whose varying height  
the season’s procession,  we live in a world  we live in a world

thanks to our sun:  thanks to our sun:  thanks to our sun:

our unchanging  our unchanging  our unchanging
steadfast and stable  steadfast and stable  steadfast and stable
bright blue  bright blue  bright blue
pilot light.  pilot light.  pilot light.

Spring, to house crickets,  Spring, to house crickets,  Spring, to house crickets,
crick-et  crick-et  crick-et
means no more  means no more  means no more

than the time  than the time  than the time
when fresh greens  when fresh greens  when fresh greens
once again grace the floor

No matter the month  No matter the month  No matter the month
we stay well fed and warm  we stay well fed and warm  we stay well fed and warm

unconcerned about cold fronts and wind chill and storms.  For while others are ruled  For while others are ruled

whose varying height  whose varying height  whose varying height  
the season’s procession,  we live in a world  we live in a world

thanks to our sun:  thanks to our sun:  thanks to our sun:

our unchanging  our unchanging  our unchanging
steadfast and stable  steadfast and stable  steadfast and stable
bright blue  bright blue  bright blue
pilot light.  pilot light.  pilot light.

Summer’s the season  Summer’s the season  Summer’s the season

crick-et  crick-et  crick-et
for pie crumbs:

peach, pear, boysenberry  quince, apricot, plum

Pumpkin seeds tell us  Pumpkin seeds tell us  Pumpkin seeds tell us

crick-et  crick-et  crick-et
fall’s arrived  fall’s arrived  fall’s arrived

while hot chocolate spills  hint that it’s  winter outside.

while hot chocolate spills  hint that it’s  winter outside.
November 13:
Cold told me
to fasten my feet
to this branch,
to dangle upside down
from my perch,
to shed my skin,
to cease being a caterpillar
and I have obeyed.

December 6:
Green,
the color of leaved and life,
has vanished!
The empire of leaves
lies in ruins!
I study the
Brown new world around me.

January 4:
I can make out snow falling.
For five days and nights
it’s been drifting down.

February 12:
An ice storm last night.
Unable to see out
at all this morning.
Yet I hear boughs cracking
and branches falling.
Hungry for sounds
in this silent world,
I cherish these,
ponder their import,
miser them away
in my memory,
and wait for more.

March 28:
I wonder whether
I am the same being
who started this diary.
I’ve felt stormy inside
like the weather without.
My mouth is reshaping,
my legs are dissolving,
wings are growing
my body’s not mine.

I find I never tire of
watching the flakes
in their multitudes
passing my window.

The world is now white.

Astounding.
I enter these
wondrous events
in my chronicle
knowing no reader
would believe me.
Whenever we’re asked if we walk upon water we answer
To be sure.
Whenever we’re asked if we walk on it often we answer
Quite often.
All day through.
Should we be questioned on whether it’s easy we answer
A snap.
Should we be told that it’s surely a miracle we reply
Balderdash!
Nonsense!
Whenever we’re asked for instructions we always say
and do as we do.

Whenever we’re asked if we walk upon water we answer
Of course.
Believe me, there’s no call at all to be nervous
as long as you’re reasonably mindful that you –
But by that time our student has usually don’t ask me why sunk from view.

Put down one foot and then put down another, resting upon the thin film on the surface.
Believe me, there’s no call at all to be nervous
as long as you’re reasonably mindful that you –
But by that time our student has usually don’t ask me why sunk from view.

It’s quite true.
Each day.
Believe me, there’s no call at all to be nervous
as long as you’re reasonably mindful that you –
But by that time our student has usually don’t ask me why sunk from view.

Quite often.

Put down one foot and then put down another, resting upon the thin film on the surface.

Put down one foot and then put down another, resting upon the thin film on the surface.

Put down one foot and then put down another, resting upon the thin film on the surface.

Put down one foot and then put down another, resting upon the thin film on the surface.

Put down one foot and then put down another, resting upon the thin film on the surface.