

Claire Hero

The First Upheaval

All migrations begin in words but
When did the sentence begin and
Where does the period fall I am
Afraid I was not paying attention
When my time came to board I
Let the others go in between me
And the place I want to be there
Is a date line to cross and when
I emerge at the end on which side
Will I be able to make the choice

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There are to be trial evacuations
One shift in the air and the consequent
Eruptions continue for years of course
Populations thrive on such upheavals
Seeds cracking in fire are carried away
After the storm the splintered tree reroots
On rock even the zero ground gives
Its absence a place and who am I
To say destruction when something roots
The unearthing will become metaphor

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After the upheaval there is the need
For order to spring into line they say
Order can rise out of disorder but
How do we tell them apart what

Is the order and what disorder will
I find the new self when it emerges
Like a flower in a field which is
The weed is that which grows in
Disturbed soil marks the presence
Of change and time will tell me

*

The simple art of inhabiting a body
Becomes a trial in time of course
Not to mention space I cannot
Link this rib to mountains emphasise
What is most base in I want nothing
To do with the sublime trial and
Error it is to attempt separation
Is to acknowledge the isthmus
Is my body to be always tripping
This tightrope back into absence

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All migrations disappear like hanel
Cracking in fire I am carried away where
Does the period begin in words but
To acknowledge the error it is to attempt
The simple art of inhabiting a body
For the self to catch her black sheep
Always tripping this tightrope back
Toward open ground I am moving
Here and there is all in the mind
I emerge at the end on which side

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After all the flying there is the wanting
And the place I want to be is
Not to mention space I cannot
Disappear like birds fade out of colour
Isn't it a matter of feeling something akin to
The other goes in between me and I am
The woman pulling from which way the water
Will become what is most base in
The beginning let fear be the simple art
Of inhabiting the air and the consequent

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After all the flying there is the waiting
For the self to catch up and look
Around wherever I am it seems I am
Not yet on course the line between
Here and there is all in the mind
Disappearing like hanel's crumbs
Toward open ground I am moving
Closer and closer in the beginning
Birds feel something akin to fear
Just before they migrate after all

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Wherever I am am I the woman
Pulling her black sheep on a leash up
A hill in the quaintest town in the world
The hoofs click like high heels of course
Isn't it all a matter of knowing what you
Are running from which way the water
Flows at what precise moment the sky
Fades out of colour isn't it a matter
Of recognizing your self when you see it
Is all down hill from there of course

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In time the self emerges as a field
Where a cloud of birds gather
The ground will soon be empty of
Seeds I shook around took months
To reveal themselves as flowers and
Still I did not know what to expect
When I finally looked out the window
The land appeared as a long white
Cloud and then it parted as though
I was expected to emerge in time

American-born **Claire Hero** now teaches at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand. Her poems have appeared in recent issues of *Crowd*, *Tinfish*, and *DIAGRAM*.