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On Reading Old Poems

LINDA CHOWN

Surprised by all those words,
the barren complications, by the way
I tried too hard to make things more,
yes, say it out, to be creative,
I must have been living indoors too long,
my eyes peering through tree leaves,
my nose breathing old book dust,
my tongue lacquered with liquidy discretions
so that these poems seem mummies
in a glass cage, all wrapped and wound,
yellowing at the seams, too suspect of fraud
to be the fertile that poems need be, to be.

I would have them leaves, transparent
in the light. I would grow them green
to catch the sight. Their sound ring
like colored bead doors swaying in a village
wind at night. I would let them go like children
or bubbles in the air, convinced of their shape,
if I knew they came really from feeling,
where animals quake. We'd join
and climb, threading words on the sky
and disperse like summer fireworks,
bright and spent in an unrepeatabe fall,
hailing down a touch of glory, giving
our all.