

GRADIVA



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Gradya

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She who walks,
walking,
the woman who walks,
that woman,
walking,
the splendid one,
unreal twice over,
thus real, who walks
with her sisters,
the three who walk
early, in the dew.

The dew, called
“what is it?” called
Dieu,
the teaching water,
drops of the night.

She who does not stride,
who does not go dreamily,
who is real, who walks
with naked foot,
who lifts her foot
and sets it down,
sets her heel down
in wet grass,
she whose toes, whose
arch, the arch of her foot,
whose foot lifts
and flexes, whose toes
press the earth,
whose heel is firm,
she who walks,
walking ahead,
even of her sisters,

across the wet field.

She who has risen early,
who hears the owl
and the mourning dove.

She who lifts her skirt,
who lifts the heavy cloth,
the folds of,
the stuff of her skirt,
who gathers in her hand
the soft cloth of her garment
and lifts it from the ground,
walking with wet feet and ankles,
with cool feet in the dew.

With warm thighs under her skirt,
under the cloth, her warmth
as she walks, as she walks away
from chaos, history, obsession,
she to whom the walls of the city
are as mist.

The rhythm of sisters,
rhythm of hips, deep
socket of the back,
the sway of hips,
spine rising
from the cleft of her buttocks,
her torso rising, uplifted.

Each step lifts her.
It is a rocking
and a sailing,
a moving forward
while hovering.

The unthinking acts of her feet,
knees and hips, the hinges, the slip,
the synovial fluency, the slip of
thighs overtaking each other,
the genital slip, the smallest.

Unreal twice over,
therefore real, she walks ahead
of those who imagine,
remember, deny
and pursue her,
who are perplexed,
refreshed, comforted,
pleased, vexed, shaken by her,
who confuse her with her name.

She slips away.
She balances,
acquiesces,
moves forward.
Her gaze is a sailing ship.

Her foot on the earth
pleasures her, the earth
pressures her, answers her.
It is her pleasure.

The moist cloud
of her breath
and of the earth,
her own perfume
in her skirt,
in her armpit,
the perfume
of her sisters,
of the grass,
even of her name,
all these are in the air.

The dew is in her skirt,
her cloth, her clothes,
her hem heavy with dew
cannot be helped.

That she is free of us,
free of our supplications,
our promises,
free of our books.

Her wet skirt is her book.
She who resolves,
absolves and reveals,
wrings out the solvent
from her own skirt.
Her hem rains,
love doctoring love.

Our father the owl,
our mother the mourning dove,
our sisters the laughter of her sisters.

The sun and moon are in the sky.
The morning star is in the sky,
a wet flame. How pale the moon is.
How at one everything is in her gaze.

You walk with her,
wait for her,
marry and abandon her.
She heals the letters of your name.

You dream you are her only errand.
She leaves her footprints in you.

She who slips between columns,
who advances, who rises
and walks on, splendid in walking.