Nicholas Gallimore

February 10, 2014

Expository Writing 25

Pre-Draft 1.2 Transcription of

*The Judgment of the Birds, Loren Eiseley*

Data or Direct Description

*Though Eiseley’s outlook is often characterized by loneliness and pessimism, he finds comfort in our shared condition with other animals and in man’s capacity for “rare and hidden communion with nature.”*  *- 525*

*We rush to and fro like Mat Hatters upon our peculiar errands, all the time imagining our surroundings to be dull and ourselves quite ordinary creatures. (...) This cannot be done while one is being jostled and hustled along a crowded street. – 525-526*

*I leaned out sleepily through the open window. (...) As I looked, the outlines of these lofts became more distinct because the light was being reflected from the wings of pigeons who, in utter silence, were beginning to float outward upon the city. – 526*

*I found my coat on the chair, and it slowly became clear to me that there was a way down through the floors, that I was, after all only a man. – 527*

*All planes were grounded, and even a pedestrian could hardly see his outstretched hand before him. – 527*

*Suddenly out of the fog, at about the level of my eyes, and so closely that I flinched, there flashed a pair of immense black wings and a huge beak. The whole bird rushed over my head with a frantic cawing outcry of such hideous terror as I have never heard in a crow’s voice before, and never expect to hear again. – 528*

*The land, if one can call it a land, is a waste as lifeless as that valley in which lie the kings of Egypt. (...) Nothing grows among its pinnacles; there is no shade except under great toadstools of sandstone whose bases have been eaten to the shape of wine glasses by the wind. – 528-529*

*It was a late hour on a cold, wind-bitten autumn day when I climbed a great hill spined like a dinosaur’s back and tried to take my bearings. – 529*

*Across that desert of eroding clay and wind-worn stone they came with a faint wild twittering that filled all the air about me as those tiny living bullets hurtled past into the night. – 529*

*The iron did not remember the blood it had once moved within, the phosphorus had forgot the savage brain. – 529*

*I had lifted up a fistful of that ground. (...) There went phosphorous, there went iron, there went carbon, there beat the calcium in those hurrying wings. (...) I dropped my fistful of earth. – 530*

*You may put it that I had come over a mountain, that I had slogged through fern and pine needles for half a long day, and that on the edge of a little glade with one long, crooked branch extending across it, I had sat down to rest with my back against a stump. – 530*

*When I awoke, dimly aware of some commotion and outcry in the clearing, the light was slanting down through the pines in such a way that the glade was lit like some vast cathedral. – 530*

*“Good Lord,” I thought, “she has found herself a king of minor sun and is going to upset the course of nature.” (...) She ignored me and went on tightening and improving her web. – 532*

*There were a couple of iridescent green beetle cases turning slowly on a loose strand of web, a fragment of luminescent eye from a moth’s wing and a large indeterminable object, perhaps a cicada, that had struggled and been wrapped in silk. – 532*

Explores the Significance of the Bird

*Though Eiseley’s outlook is often characterized by loneliness and pessimism, he finds comfort in our shared condition with other animals and in man’s capacity for “rare and hidden communion with nature.”*  *- 525*

*I have come to suspect that within their degree it is sensed by animals, though perhaps as rarely as among men. – 527*

*This crow lives near my house, and though I have never injured him, he takes good care to stay up in the very highest trees and, in general, to avoid humanity. – 527*

*The iron did not remember the blood it had once moved within, the phosphorus had forgot the savage brain. – 529*

*Those eyes had looked out upon a world as real as ours; dark, savage brains had roamed and roared their challenges into the steaming night. – 529*

*The iron did not remember the blood it had once moved within, the phosphorus had forgot the savage brain. – 529*

*I had lifted up a fistful of that ground. (...) There went phosphorous, there went iron, there went carbon, there beat the calcium in those hurrying wings. (...) I dropped my fistful of earth. – 530*

*He gulped, whetted his beak on the dead branch a moment and sat still. (...) They fluttered as though to point their wings at the murderer. – 531*

*I was standing under the shadow of an orb-weaving spider. Gigantically projected against the street, she was about her spinning when everything was going underground. - 532*

*“Good Lord,” I thought, “she has found herself a king of minor sun and is going to upset the course of nature.” (...) She ignored me and went on tightening and improving her web. – 532*

*I thought of setting it down carefully as a message to the future: “In the days of the frost seek a minor sun.” (...) It was better, I decided, for the emissaries returning from the wilderness, even if they were merely descending from a stepladder, to record their marvel, not to define its meaning. (...) In the end I merely made a mental note: One specimen of Epeira observed building a web in a street light. - 533*