

Rebecca Bilkau

A response to Barlach's angel

This is the guardian I want: solemn eyed,
in the way of one who sees, understands
the whole muddle of it all, all the ideals
not quite abandoned but safely compromised;
who embraces the loneliness of little infidelities,
the extra whisky when lightning blasts
the wastelands of my memory yet again.

A rain-coated angel, ready for weather, who knows
that nothing is so prone to alteration
as the temperature of my anger, terror, love,
who meets my demands for permanence
with snaps of a grey M&S frock wearing
nine-year-old me, *you want that for ever?*

Yes, a heavenly body too damned heavy to fly
but hovering wingless anyhow. As if to say believing
in angels releases me from believing laws
of gravity, catapults my imagination into thermals
where impossibility is just a fad. Yes, yes, give me
the offspring of woodsmiths who have hammered
their own thumbs, blown on the wounds, kept at it.