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# "For a Moment You Are Nowhere," "Flag," "Nut," "Window"

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# Four Poems

MICHAEL GOLDMAN

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## For a Moment You Are Nowhere

Don't be afraid of your ghosts,  
dead Jews, dead parents, amputated desires,

the ground fog you drive through tonight  
on your way home,

the night's wine cut by coffee,  
the sweetness half drowned.

You drive down into smoke  
and the road's gone.

For a moment you are nowhere, gasping, guessing,  
fighting sensations  
the dead can't appreciate.

## Flag

I am not under a Japanese illusion.  
This Monarch butterfly is not  
a torn flag, a brushstroke,  
or a fleck of lint from my spiritual life.

Yes, it is black, white and orange;  
by this much do I deliver it  
to the abstract feast of my mind,  
the flutter called knowledge.

Already the thing is gone.  
The brute wisp of purpose  
dips and is quickly separate,  
it slides through the meadow, the valley,  
leaving me, was it wingdust  
or the lost pennon of a memory  
in the long tunnel of thought?

## Four Poems

MICHAEL GOLDMAN

### Nut

I wanted to be a slightly academic  
maverick like Thoreau, but  
I seem to have ended up  
a slightly maverick academic, also  
like Thoreau and the wonderful thing  
about this hugely forested  
endlessly renewable country is  
the difference doesn't seem to have mattered much.  
We both prospered,  
and felt upon our tongues  
the slightly cracked  
nut  
of American language.

## Window

You might sit here, finishing,  
 smoked salmon, scrambled eggs,  
 spring glare out Barney Greengrass's window,  
 watching the garbage truck  
 speeding by

with Paris at one end of the New York street  
 and the end of the world  
 at the other

and wonder, purely  
 as a skeptical indeed nearly lapsed  
 believer in Pleasure,  
 how this breakfast

is to be followed meaningfully  
 even unto lunch  
 except by the sacraments  
 of fiction.