

# Poetry

## Lizard at the University

*John Herschel*

I am a lizard at the university,  
restless in my skin  
like a suitcase left on the turntable  
at the airport.  
The liquid in my head expands,  
lofting paper airplanes in the clouds;  
they rise and drift and spiral serenely.  
O if only I had wings,  
they would be in the museum of medical anomalies.

One slithers through a place like this,  
avoiding certain people  
who are like brooms sweeping their own straw,  
and have that curious frenzied look  
of a drummer in a silent movie.  
When they have tiffs the clouds collide  
like a glass of milk lying on its side;  
even the buildings seem like drunks  
in the middle of a huge explanation.

But the obvious is not obvious here.  
Those who aspire to great heights  
are often driven by an urge to jump.  
And even the windows weep from boredom,  
as the hours circumnavigate in amber drops  
like little oars dipped in marmalade.  
When I look up at the sky,

it's as if someone in a blue shirt  
were playing a joke on me.

I flick my tongue  
to turn the pages in a book.  
The lowest grain I am, the minimum,  
has run aground on a berm of gravel.  
But I have packed my claws  
and can barely scratch  
the yellow paint from a pencil.

A red hawk spirals in the parking lot.

My elbows grind into the sand;  
I scribble notes in the margin.

### **Mirage**

*Ed Subitzky*

I cannot die  
because I never lived.  
I cannot cease to exist  
because I never was.

I am a filigree,  
a fantasy,  
spun by an organ  
looking back on itself  
to understand itself,  
chasing its disappearing tail  
(which chases a tale)  
through a whirlpool of nothingness  
from which nothing can emerge;  
this sorry recursive farce  
has been given a name:  
'Me.'  
But a name does not make it real.

I am a fraud,  
a deceit,  
a narrative,  
a fiction.  
I am the fourth law of thermodynamics  
which states:  
'Fools believe in themselves.'  
But even such a fool  
(in its reflective pool)  
is palpable  
and perhaps plausible  
while I  
on the other hand  
am emptiness  
breaded into nothingness  
twisted into un-ness  
baked and served  
to its own plot device.  
Can such a thing really  
be afraid to die?

I do not know myself  
I will not miss myself  
because myself  
was never mine,  
was never self.  
This is the terror.  
This is the comfort.  
This is the truth  
insisting on hearing its own words  
even when spoken by a liar.