

San Jose State University

SJSU ScholarWorks

Faculty Publications, English and Comparative
Literature

English and Comparative Literature

March 2002

Morning in Paradiso

Alan Soldofsky

San Jose State University, alan.soldofsky@sjsu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/eng_complit_pub



Part of the [Poetry Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Alan Soldofsky. "Morning in Paradiso" *The North American Review* (2002).

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the English and Comparative Literature at SJSU ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications, English and Comparative Literature by an authorized administrator of SJSU ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@sjsu.edu.

sizzling about, a frenzy of birds
could gorge on our energy fields—

my God the spray of flies
is how we feed on each other

the larger animals skin against skin
sometimes from a distance of

hundreds thousands of miles.
So forgive me again when I'm

amazed when my love lifts her ice-
cream cone to my mouth and I crunch

into it, our energy that fur that wraps
our hands touching, birds or no birds.

This right now I can count on:
this ice-cream-cone shiver,

her red lips, her nostrils, the heat
from her cheekbones on the back

of my hand, the yogurt cups
I leave at job sites to prove

the next day I was really there.
There's a terror when her car's not

in the driveway, there's this rip
that won't seal itself up. She is gone

and the hole in the air where her heart
went blazing through, her essence having

drenched the hickory bark and pole-barn
metal—more skin we hammered into place.

There in the ice-cream parlor,
there in the shivering liquid stillness,

the impossible happens:
she wipes her mouth

with the back of her hand and it hisses
as it travels to her shining teeth.

She laughs out gusts of flame
and the birds in the ditches

cough up the beginning
of the world.

ALAN SOLDOSKY

Morning in Paradiso

Neal crying in his room will stop
depending upon whether he wants to suck
or not. He knows how to bring his mother
to silence the caterwaul of his impulse,

to make her rise from bed at the threshold of dawn
when all but the body's stirring is invisible
and lift him out of the little dungeon
of his crib to lay him against her breast,

the pillowy temple that men cleave to.
I have a little song that wakes me in the dark.
If I should get up, I'll lose it.
Faint as chalk, it marks some fold in my brain

that will be forgotten when the day starts.
She will come back to bed, and I'll lie there,
my body an argument we haven't concluded.
We don't touch, nor do we care to,

because by living our lives we are extinguished.
Is that what Dante knew,
lifting the burden from himself once and for all
in the immense truth of his music.

She says nothing.
She rubs sleep from her eyes
under the blankets while the garbage men
bang the cans in the driveway.

It sounds like they're in the bedroom.
Though it's feeble, there's enough light
through the curtain to mean it's morning,
and Adam gets up to watch television.

The radio turns on by itself to the news,
Outside, the neighbor starts his pick-up
and in the eye of the swimming pool
the sky lightens to blue.