

patti, did art get us?

by Gary Percesepe

often as i lie awake i wonder are you awake too?
we never had any children, he said ruefully
that summer i cried so much that robert called me soakie
robert, dying: creating silence
nineteen i was i'd given my baby up for adoption
why can't i write something that would awaken the dead?
i first saw you sleeping on a simple iron bed pale & slim
there is strength in blackness pure hearts are kin
bare-chested with strands of beads below his chin
will you write our story? no one but you can
he opened his eyes and smiled his shepherd hair his mass of
curls
do you want me to? i never heard him speak again
that night in brooklyn we'd looked at books on dali and surrealism
our work was our children
wordless we absorbed each other's thoughts and fell asleep at
dawn
he was a man but in his presence i still felt like a girl
we stayed together all summer, nothing spoken but understood
we were hansel & gretel in the black forest world
at the whitney we only had money for one ticket, so
i stayed outside and lit a cigarette and awaited your report
we dreamed our work would be displayed there one day
we buried him at the whitney museum at the blue hour

but of all your work, you are still the most beautiful

the most beautiful of all
little emerald bird wants to fly away
it is true i heard god is where you are
little emerald soul must you say goodbye?
if i cup my hand could i make him stay?

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little emerald eye
we must say goodbye

far from us

by Gary Percesepe

i picture you with a star at your foot
making me cornell boxes with colored
string, paper lace, discarded rosaries and
black pearls, a visual poem written for one

i'd give you an italian vase if I thought it'd
help, but I've discarded your spell for prayer

long ago I figured out that you were my twin
but we shuttle back and forth like the ferryman's
children, across four states of non-being, across
our river of tears, telling our stories like wendy

entertaining the lost children of neverland
and baby, you know what? it's not us.

