

V. B. Price

**FIVE**

**GORGEOUS**

**LOSSES**

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*Not all loss is catastrophic.  
Some can leave the old euphoric.  
How releasing it would be,  
and pleasing too, for instance,  
to lose without resistance,  
not only all your teeth, your hair,  
your nimble gait,  
but what is lost by happy wisdom,  
not the tragedies of fate.*

I. THE LOSS OF A LITTLE STUPIDITY

Waking up from dreams  
insane with truth  
that wing away like bats  
wearing political masks,

you can tell you are alive,  
right now, right now in the morning sun,  
by the absence of the phantoms  
of stupidities of power

all undone, idiotic-seeming  
as losing your keys  
then feeling free with finding them  
right where you put them

rather like finding life again  
and putting down the gun.

## II. THE LOSS OF SOME WRETCHED FEAR

To lose one impacted fear,  
one dark novel of a worry,  
just one, is worth

all the corns, the bunions,  
twisted toes, sore backs  
shot knees that pile up on us

like an avalanche of books  
unwritten and unread. Just one loss  
of any dread long mummified

is a feast of such resplendence  
that all the stars ring out with light  
sounding through the somberness of space

like a dance tune of the gorgeous graces  
soft shoeing on the moon.

## III. THE LOSS OF A SLUG OF IGNORANCE

It's the standard joke to say  
the more I know the less I understand. But  
ignorance does have a way

of beating a path to your door,  
like a salesman can make  
the absurdist claims seem like wisdom

gleaming holy above the herd.  
What a happy smartness, though,  
to accept you'll always know

next to nothing when compared  
to what is aching in you to be known.  
Uncountable as drops of rain, and so

increase your store of ignorance  
gone right down the drain.

#### IV. THE LOSS OF A DOSE OF ANGER

To feel a grudge just vanish  
is better than losing a limp,

or a molar throbbing.  
What could be worse

than to be wronged  
and then to let that wrong

crystallize into a way of life,  
like a bone spur or a kidney stone,

so startlingly flawed  
all the stars seem ruthless

and even heaven scared,  
blank and cold without a heart?

Is that any way to start the day,  
day after day after day?

#### V. THE LOSS OF AN OLD BAD HABIT

Bad habits don't want to be said,  
They want to be denied so surely  
they can seep unseen like strain

makes rigid the subtlest of brains.  
But the loss of one of them,  
like wasting without caring

that your having drains another,  
the loss of rote indifference, of this one  
forced way of living wrong, is like

expelling a dill seed from under a denture.  
What relief! The simple habits of living right  
in your own eyes are exquisite

as the body's youthful joy is wise,  
seeking noble pleasure with no compromise.

**AND**

**FIVE**

**HEALING**

**LOSSES**

I. THE LOSS OF A FEW STALE FEARS

Our dead pile up. Peace is snagged  
like ducklings gobbled by perch. Loss

consumes us, even as we come to lose  
some of our dearest dreads. This is age's

consummation. Fear wears down to a darkening ember;  
we're burned out on our horror of ghost sins

and failures moaning under the bed.  
The joke we learn is that letting go

is the full and only meaning of control.  
Even the loss of fear's mere dander

rings a bell: What joy for awhile,  
in the silence of the night, to open our minds and find

ourselves just rippling out beyond  
the carrion smell of all the myths of heaven and hell.

## II. THE LOSS OF SOME STUPIDITY

Hope gets conned again. Suicide gulls the proud  
with cruel applause for being pointless.  
And even as we scream diatribes of grief

we feel in our selves, from time to time,  
the sweetest vanishing of idiot delights, like spending life as if it  
were money, calculating love o

n a cost benefit analysis. hating,  
as fallen and debased, the whole  
truth of the world that we know exists

with our body's infallible savvy.  
Oh, go ahead, ask the hippo  
to get off your foot. Wisdom's

too serious to be boring. It counsels  
the painless safety to be absurd

## III. THE LOSS OF A LITTLE IGNORANCE

We think we know too much  
about the look of death, about depression's  
tangle of burnt roots. We even think  
our ignorance knows no bounds and so  
seems filled with knowing  
what we cannot know at all.

It's wonderful to figure out, of course,  
that stars aren't holes in the sky, that everything  
has to go somewhere, that motives  
are so knotted none proves wholly true. It's more  
wonderful to learn that knowledge is the road  
to doubt and humble pie, to seeing mind itself

as a reassuring haze on the endless  
deep surface of the Far-Beyond-Us.

#### IV. THE VANISHING OF SOME ANGER

Kindness drapes itself  
with a more revealing fold than pain's  
grim skirt of bones. Beauty and honesty  
see each other home in the dark.

Shooting stars have shown us  
death is not out to get us all alone.  
How could we be rage-torn at leaves falling,  
or bodies wilting? It's ease we need

opposing cruelty that believes it's good.  
The ease we have with fact  
cancels anger as its own slow torture, dark  
humiliation, comparing life

to solid dead abstractions. What a relief  
to care so much we couldn't care less about judging.

#### V. THE ABSENCE OF A FEW OF BAD HABITS

It's no different from removing  
vestigial hooves from your heels,  
or that pesky boney tail that pierces love seats.  
It's a mundane metamorphosis, the revolution

from the habit normalcy of gloom.  
Even when friends are falling all around us,  
we still can lose the guilt  
of the of the automatic yes, the stunting caution

of the automatic no, the urge to force the truth  
into a tiny hole not deep enough for a single fact.  
Such wholesome heresies cheat grief, free us  
from deforming lessons, wrong and old,

we can't defeat head on. They leave us illicitly  
released and oh so gorgeously replete.

*"If what heals can bless  
can what blesses heal?  
And all come green again  
That was bodied forth  
Years and years ago?"*

–Wilfred Townley Scott