

A DANGEROUS ADVENTURE

She's thinking, like a jaguar, or a dagger.
Words but more than words. Currents, hairpin
turns. It's scary but exciting. It's like dancing
on a precipice or sleeping under a waterfall.
She doesn't know the way home but she's running
and leaping over chasms in the earth, and she's singing
too,
in a foreign language she's never heard spoken.
But the melody is one I've known all my life.
As a child I hummed it when I dreamed of her,
when I calculated the thousands of accidents it would
take
to find her. And now her several rivers
are tossing up ancient maps with military strategies
traced in nearly invisible ink. She's typing, typing
in hot pursuit, a delirium possesses her,
she falls, gets up, shakes herself. A reverie
chases her through a forest, clippity clippity.
Then silence. Perhaps aphasia, or dysphasia.
She's a blind mystic who hasn't spoken in seven years.
She's walking backwards across a jumbo desert.
This is one of her more difficult passages.
A very obscure god peeks at her from the corner of a
mirage
And I think, that's my baby, come on baby,
you're in the homestretch now. But she won't
come home. She's hang gliding over a volcano
and has no use for the old ritual of "dinner."

I first read "A Dangerous Adventure," included in Jim's Shroud of the Gnome, when it appeared in Gettysburg Review. I prefer the GR version, which opens with two lines Jim left off in his book: "The woman I love is typing in a nearby room / Clippity clippity clippity clippity, then silence." This is one of my

favorite poems of his--I've even memorized it--a love poem to the woman he loves, as well as to writing and the creation of poems.

- Herman Fong