

CONSUMED

Why should you believe in magic,
pretend an interest in astrology
or the tarot? Truth is, you are

free, and what might happen to you
today, nobody knows. And your
personality may undergo a radical

transformation in the next half
hour. So it goes. You are consumed
by your faith in justice, your

hope for a better day, the rightness
of fate, the dreams, the lies
the taunts. — Nobody gets what he

wants. A dark star passes through
you on your way home from
the grocery : never again are you

the same — an experience which is
impossible to forget, impossible
to share. The longing to be pure

is over. You are the stranger
who gets stranger by the hour.

There's so much in this poem that makes me think of the word surrender. Surrender in the good way, the spiritual way, the one that means you relinquish your life to the mystery of the universe. Humans use language so often as a method to control: control meaning, control reality. What poems can do for us is remind us that nothing is in our control, language least of all, and that the joke is always on us.

Everything is more interesting when we surrender. Jim's poetry helped me to process this. His work taught me not just how to surrender, but how to do it with style.

- Colleen Barry