

## & TURN TO SEE

CLAY MATTHEWS

A first warm day in what will be a succession  
of warm days to come, and I am moved  
to being warm, etc.

Spring starts in the soul  
and that's sappy to say, but true,  
which is also sappy to say, but truth!  
I am sitting on the porch reading  
Hopkins and Whitman and Nate Pritts  
it is good to feel loved

by a woman it is  
good to sit on porches and waste time.  
Should I have more to waste.

That wasn't a question.  
But I do start to ask things  
of the sky I ask rain I ask warmth I ask to know  
the ins and outs of heaven and hell  
or whether there is a heaven and hell  
or one or the other or nothing, but being  
in uncertainties, uncertainties, and it is  
too easy

to quote Keats but why not he said it  
first I am only saying it again.

So I place my hand against my throat,  
and hum, and feel the vibration that is the difference  
between now and then.

A cold Budweiser sweats on the table  
and brand names carry on  
from one generation to the next. And all names  
carry on, which is why they are what they are  
and beautiful and needed

and called out now  
and again by mothers and wives and even strangers,  
sometimes, or strangers who know a little  
bit more than they know they know  
it is no accident to walk  
through the world and be noticed.

MARCH 12<sup>TH</sup>, 2008

A door closes  
and for a moment  
my shadow  
is gone. Outside  
the passing  
hawk. Outside  
the horned owl  
hooting. We plant  
a garden,  
and in the ground  
the promise  
of life ever-  
after, of change,  
rebirth, meta-  
morphosis  
and stasis and  
the wings  
of a butterfly  
perched on young  
basil. Life begins  
with a bud.  
The road begins  
with asphalt,  
or gravel,  
or even just  
dirt depending  
on where  
you come from,  
what time  
you hail from,  
era, eros, agape,  
and the season  
of love. I am  
not worthy  
today, of the  
small circle  
of daffodils  
that push  
their way up  
around the small  
tree in the front  
yard. We are  
none of us

worthy, but worth  
as much, our  
weight in bloom  
as we turn  
our eyes  
as we look  
at the morning  
sun, the constant,  
the unknown,  
the terror  
of another day,  
and open  
our small white  
faces, and blossom  
into holy versions  
of much holier  
beings, plants  
planted with  
hope, people  
planted with  
fresh soil, small  
ways in which  
the ground  
lets loose itself  
and takes back  
itself, and today  
begins a slow  
movement  
toward green  
gone up and so  
so longingly so.

## POEM IN OPEN DIALOGUE WITH GROUNDHOG'S DAY

Thursday in the afternoon and I did not eat  
an apple this morning. I'm not proud  
of myself. So what. So we begin to take on  
larger conceptions of the self, so we begin  
again, the whole shebang of "becoming."  
And ergo the quotation marks are really  
angel wings a friend once told me they do things  
with your words, terrible things, beautiful  
things, they lift them off the page and send them  
flying across some other drama, another story,  
where they settle in the middle between "love"  
and "love" and offer the world another riddle  
that purports to know something extra.  
Extra time. Extraterrestrial. Extra-extra, read  
all about it, folks. Thursday and I have been  
in probably thousands, at least, I do not care,  
etc. Hello all, warm greetings, I've been thinking  
about my health, about what I am, exactly,  
you're probably wondering why I called  
this meeting today. I don't like any of the  
new answers. Well, not most. This was not  
how things turned out in the other version.  
Either you will see your shadow or you will  
not see your shadow. The shadow itself  
has always been pretty much a yes or no answer.  
I'd prefer not to go into it. I'd prefer to get  
my mail on time. It is another cold winter  
in a long history of cold winters. So we say it  
every year: Jesus, it's cold. And it is, and by god  
colder than the last. Time itself is just a long  
chain of events, and discrepancies between  
those events, and Thursdays, and slight variations  
that suggest something big is about to happen,  
believe you me, I said it here first and claim it all,  
whatever it is, from the beginning to the end  
and beyond where "love" escapes any before  
or after, and flies itself into a sunset, past an ocean,  
over a meadow, landing softly in some fairytale  
about the human race, and time and water  
and weather recorded both accurately and inaccurately,  
over thousands and thousands of years.