

## Fifteen

*The Fall of the Rebel Angels*

Pieter Bruegel the Elder, 1562

[*Terrapin!*] [*Tentacle!*] In the atrium

Brightness my sons'  
Delight presses so close

To the canvas the guard coughs a caution.

The commotion  
Of wing and fang that is Bruegel's *Fall*

*Of the Rebel Angels* hangs like a trespass,

[*Claw!*] [*Carapace!*]  
Like a curious cabinet

Had sex with a scavenger hunt. [*Salamander!*]

Halfway headlong  
Down his hurtle one handles

In his demonic fist a fishbasket

Finned with switches.  
Another faller fledges

Into swallowtail, the fleshy edges

Of his lewdness  
Startled with butterfly finery.

A third [*Hurdy-gurdy!*] is girt with the garnet

And sudden gold  
Wings of the lucifer bird—

Every peculiar pursued to its foundering  
Is part something  
Else, [*Armadillo!*] [*Esquire!*]

As agog at itself as at an ambush  
Of angels. My angels,  
Half-plunged into each your own strangeness,

Gangly and almost in need of a shave,  
[*Amphibian!*]  
[*Astrolabe!*] as the transiting sun

Through the windowpane frames you momentarily still  
In your mutual  
Conclave of puzzle and name

I observing can guess why the heavens  
Mustered, taking  
To trumpet and frantic buckler:

Some with swords would arrest that reverseless  
[*Pufferfish!*] fall,  
Holding fast their once familiars

By force. But see, in the ether—a flourish  
Of brasses, a mass  
Of seraphs suspended, weaponless.

I suppose those horns clarion not in discord  
But in blessing,  
A benediction on the dim,

Bewildered way ahead, which as yet  
They do not know,  
And so cannot regret.