

Things I Didn't Know I Loved
by Gwen Sibley

It is 1987, July 21st
I am standing by a fountain on the Place de la Concorde
Water is sparkling
I never knew I liked
water spouting like fireworks from gaping fish mouths over the basin
I don't like
likening the spouting of water to that of an exploding rocket
I didn't know I loved the fish
can someone who
hasn't built a fountain love it
I've never built a fountain
It must be my only Platonic love

and here I've loved the obelisque all this time
whether motionless like this it stands surveying the square
Parisian cobblestones sprinkled with lampposts
or whether it stretches out flat as far as the eye can see

I didn't know I liked the sky
grey or blue
the heavenly hue that Michelangelo painted on his back on the
ceiling at the Sistine Chapel
at home I devoured Travel Guides of Paris with a starved heart

I didn't know I loved statues
I had only a few in my garden
I just remembered the flags
I love them too
whether they're flying high far above me
or whether I'm standing by their side

wind gently caresses my hair
both soft and warm and smelling of roses
I didn't know I liked wind
I never knew I loved the sun
even when blazing white as now
at home too it sometimes sparkles like ice
but you aren't about to paint it like that

I didn't know I loved the mopeds

whether I watch them flash by or still
whether they look like shooting stars or standing sentinels

the water cascades over the rim into the stone basin

I never knew I like the water cascading
showers fly from the fish

I didn't know I loved showers

I didn't know I loved so many things and I had to wait until I was
forty-six to find it out standing by the fountain on the Place de la Concorde
watching the world reappear as if in a watercolor painting that has descended
from the sky.