Constantly Risking Absurdity (#15)

By

Constantly risking absurdity and death
whenever he performs
above the heads
of his audience

the poet like an acrobat
climbs on rime
to a high wire of his own making

and balancing on eyebeams
above a sea of faces
paces his way
to the other side of day

performing entrechats
and sleight-of-foot tricks

and other high theatrics
and all without mistaking
any thing
for what it may not be

For he’s the super realist
who must perforce perceive
taut truth
before the taking of each stance or step
in his supposed advance
toward that still higher perch

where Beauty stands and waits
with gravity
to start her death-defying leap

And he
a little charleychaplin man
who may or may not catch

her fair eternal form
spreadeagled in the empty air
of existence


Source: A Coney Island of the Mind: Poems (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1958)