

The New World

The New World arrived
when we were unconscious

It laid on top of the Old World
like vellum paper
and showed us what we'd done

There was no one to blame
because everyone was an institution
and therefore subject to rules

There were many new documents
we felt compelled to sign

There was still fresh juice
though we regarded it skeptically

The New World shined
brighter / and was

Red became a color
for the first time in decades

Heat came from humans
who were just pure energy

Food grew faster
and more anonymously

Commented [KS1]: The poem introduces the idea of a “new world” arriving in a very typical way. Or at least in the frame of the book, there is this interest in a new world, with the poet physically moving to a new place and establishing something new for herself. And then the way a “new world” can’t really be willed to appear, it often arrives when it will. And the weighty image of the vellum paper speaks to its ability to displace the old.

Commented [KS2]: I like this idea that a new world puts someone in the mind of doing official activities.

Commented [KS3]: The natural appeal of the new world. But also this formal device that comes up in many verse poems in Schirmann’s book. Where the slash indicates a pause that adjusts the syntactic logic of the sentence that comes to it. Perhaps it’s a counterpoint. Perhaps it’s just a way to fit the current sentiment into the next.

Eventually

The New World split itself
between ideology and action

It made new images
and reproduced them

Many of these images
were of a much Newer World
we hadn't gotten to yet

There was a feeling permeating
all of us / a sleepy memory
of having moved beyond
the moment of choice-making

without having made
a choice at all

The New World for example
was not a singular decision

It was an adjacent performance

Long and slow
Still

I watched it sometimes
when there was nothing else on

Something to clean the house
or prepare food with

Commented [KS4]: The "ideology" and "action" is a surprise duality. And it just feels so interesting to think of this as "outlook on life" or "stance on the future" versus "doing." In particular, the enthusiasm of doing things in cooperation with the new world. And then how the actions might be more doing things because they need to be done. Like routines.

Commented [KS5]: And this is another use of the slash, where it reflects "a sleepy memory" back on the "feeling" from before, but also sets the poem into the next statement. I like it. I'm not sure its use instead of starting a new line. Except a new line wouldn't get that reflecting back as effectively.

Commented [KS6]: This is what I love so much. The idea of a newer world occupying the poet's attention. And that making the poet even question what it means to be seeking a new world.

Otherwise it was just me

And how quiet it got then