1979

Naming the Wildflowers

Gregory Djanikian

Follow this and additional works at: https://surface.syr.edu/suscholar

Part of the Poetry Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://surface.syr.edu/suscholar/vol1/iss1/13

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by SURFACE. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syracuse Scholar (1979-1991) by an authorized editor of SURFACE. For more information, please contact surface@syr.edu.
Winter, 1977:  
Messages from Upstate N.Y.  
to a Friend  
For Michael Clemens

January: thirty  
below and I want  
to be able to say that I’m  
not worried that the cold  
gets easier to bear that  
these huge and anonymous  
drifts by the road are less real  
than my house what it holds  
lamp chair book cup  
me by this window just now  
blue spruce on the hill  
disappeared in a mist of snow  
became cloud and I wonder  
what’s next even the dogs won’t  
go out but sleep where  
I can see them it’s this  
maniacal whiteness smooth  
and unblemished there’s nothing  
it won’t uncolor so  
here I am falling  
in love with what’s rough  
or imperfect this remarkable dent  
in my stove the oak floor  
I stand on repeating what’s written  
in day-glo green  
on my postbox side: Djanikian

RD 1. Proof enough  
I’m still holding my ground.

— Gregory Djanikian

Naming the Wildflowers  
For Carol and Ken

Ineptly we’ve been at it,  
the three of us,  
miscounting leaves and sepals,  
mixing up stems,  
but somehow we’ve come through  
with the right names:  
fleabane, hawkweed, bedstraw,  
and blue-eyed grass—  
those marvelous words  
that Adam must have mouthed,  
stilling each petal  
as he spoke; or if not  
Adam, then some old farmer  
suddenly turned poet  
describing to his wife  
what he’d just unearthed  
by his own garden. Now  
we’ve discovered them,  
and come next summer, sure  
and smooth-voiced with a winter’s  
worth of singing, we’ll  
pass them on to others  
so they, too, might know  
what we exist among.  
It’s a vow we’ll make good  
later. Today, we’re stumbling  
on new ground, full-throated,  
too alive with each name!

— Gregory Djanikian