

# Ideas Are Like Stars

Mary Chapin Carpenter

Today Joseph is sitting alone  
With occasional nods to the waitress  
She tops off his cup while she's snapping her gum  
Making her rounds on the lunch shift

Counting out coins, he leaves them arranged  
In neat lines and circles and arcs  
She just stares at the tip that spells out her name  
And ideas are like stars

And yesterday pedaling down 4th Avenue  
Between the stalls and the bookshops  
The sepia tones of a lost afternoon  
Cradled a curio storefront

And inside the air was thick with the past  
As the dust settled onto his heart  
And here for a moment is every place in the world  
And ideas are like stars

They fall from the sky, they run round your head  
They litter your sleep as they beckon  
They'd teach you to fly without wires or thread  
They promise if only you'd let them

For the language of longing never had words  
So how did you speak from your heart  
Yet here is a box that swears it has heard  
That ideas are like stars

Tonight Joseph stood out in the yard  
As Debussy played from the kitchen  
Celestial companions 'til mornings first lark  
Shone overhead and he listened

And who was that shadow there by the gate?  
Who was that there standing guard?  
It was only loneliness and loneliness waits  
And ideas are like stars, ideas are like stars