

Quicksand

Do you remember
How scared we were, as children,
Of sinking in quicksand?
How did we understand
That our shoes would forever stall
Us till we drowned,
That we would find our footing
Only long enough to fall?

When we grow up we laugh
At our childish fears,
Never understanding
The wisdom beyond our years that,
Had we been humble enough to listen,
Would have prepared us for the sands
To quicken.

Burn me to ashes

It's your hard edges that get me.
Your softness, softer than mine.
How can you be so much man,
And touch something in me
That is formless and foreign
Without you?

You are so distant, so other,
And I come home to you
Like to air, gasped, devoured,
When I've been underwater.
Like to water, gulped greedily
On the scorched earth of me.
Like to earth, folded into,
Submitted to,
Sacred,
Sovereign.
Like to this day our daily bread,
Fire in the hearth,

Or on the stove.
You are not a blaze but a hum:
Stoked, you could light me on fire,
Burn me to ashes,
Return me to the ground.

Permission

I don't know if it was raining
The day I convinced myself
I could grow to love him
In that gin bar across the street.
He hadn't watered his words.

The tears I forced myself to cry
Because I didn't know how
To pull out the weeds
Another man grew around my mind
Still watered my cheeks.

A doctor asked why I didn't say no
To the firefighter who snuffed out my spirit.
That was the week the beautiful boy —
His family sold carpets, or tapestry —
Made sure I knew I didn't matter.

He was my feminist friend,
Dried my eyes the week after,
Told me all the reasons he loved me,
Showed me what love meant
To him. It's funny, how much it looked like loathing.

Last night you covered me in a blanket,
Heated up my dinner,
Laughed at a bad joke I made.
I'll let you break my heart
All the rest of my life.