

flying across our eyeline.

I always knew
that people were idiots, musicians, poets,

but

I never knew
how real it was,
that your heart could feel like

flying, dancing, burning,

until we went to the bar,
that roof,
your bedroom,
with such strange, imperfect steps.

My shoes were still sticking
when I drove back to Connecticut
in the morning,

nowhere

to go but

to wait

for you

to come back to me,
to come back to our

future,

to come back
home.

Foster's Cove

The difference between
an estuary and a cove?
More ways out.

The dog is in the boat as ballast
and I am drifting my brine-stung
fingers through the weeds,
scattering minnows through
the water's dappled halls.

We have come to this place
as supplicants, penitents, pilgrims,
this bathing suit my surplice,
salt on my lips in prayer.

I am trying to remember
how to pray.

I am trying to forget
the anathema my own
heart called out,
believing me
undeserving of peace.

It is almost June,
but the mornings here
are still fog-leeched,
cold sunshine unseen,
dew-drenched
and closed shut as a fist.

When the wind picks up,
I remember the cuckoo,
think what it would be
to be lifted out and thrown
away.

There is a hammering against
my eardrum, a haunting,
a violation: *you are not here*
to resolve yourself to die.

Cardinal, robin, blue jay—
if we planted a yew tree

they'd all be here
and we'd be protected.

When I swallow water
all is salt, basalt, brimstone.

When I look at you,
I see me.

I see a way out.

Forgiveness, the wind's susurrus.
Bear witness, the bee's throaty buzz.
Kindness, the cove's heartsong.

Imagine,
I tell myself,
I make myself,
I create myself:

Imagine not needing a way out.

Ghost Story

I don't blame you for not believing me. I'm unsure, in the light, if I believe me, too. But I can't be the only one who's heard them, the voices in the house when I'm home alone. Not the radio, not some kind of mimic, no nightmares explain the voice that says my name—clear and bright as moonlight and right behind my ear, but only on nights the house is empty and silent. The dog turns his head, his ears prick. I've seen it, my heart throbbing in my throat. This house was built in 1922 and that's it, that's all I know of it, nothing personal or damned. I guess the question isn't if it's real, but if I want it to be. What I really want is a story: letters pried up from beneath floorboards, doomed love, thieves and warriors, the transfiguration of my life from a quiet house into a story worth writing about. People will, writers will find meaning in anything, even if they have to make it up, even if their own heads do it for them. Dawn comes in. That romantic, pastel light doesn't belong in a ghost story and it's easy now to believe in the sun and luck and requited love when I know you'll be home before the heat of the day cages the town in its teeth. I make coffee, make this into a different story, maybe boring, maybe unnoticed by the annals of history, maybe true. I wait for you on the porch and when you arrive and say my name I think: isn't it strange, what being seen can do to us? You don't believe my story, I can tell and I don't blame you. But you see me telling a story, you hear me, and you listen. For now, it is enough to believe in that.

A Bouquet of Cherry Blossoms

As Ovid wrote of absent lovers,
 I write these words to you, today:
even when you're beside me in bed
 I dream of you, defying all
dreamly logic, waking me
 only to help me go back
to sleep. What reveries
 are these? It's all too real—
the coarse touch of your
 hand on my naked back,
your voice a low-toned
 bell in the seashell
of my ear—echoing,
 echoing—your breath
a softness, a bouquet
 of sleep. If we were
planets, we'd be orbiting
 each other only for
the pull of the attraction,
 the gravity of the situation
invisible and too powerful
 to fight. Why wouldn't
we hold close what makes
 the void not only livable
but beautiful again? Why
 not love, even if it
leads to destruction?
 For all the lullabies
the dream-you provides,
 I always wake first,
the robins sweetly warbling
 a punch of reality.
The cherry blossoms
 have all fallen from
their branches. But
 you know what that means,
love? We'll have cherries,
 soon enough.

High Winds

Our dog is scared of the wind,
but only when he's inside
where it can't touch him.

I find this a reasonable fear.
Who wouldn't be scared of
unseen noise outside a third story

window? Two years ago, a robin
made a nest under the eaves
of our covered porch. It hurts

me to see what was left behind—
an abandoned home attached
to the one I'm trying to build.

My engagement ring catches
the light out here in a dappling,
like trees are involved, like

stars' cold but luminous fire
burns here, here. That's how
natural it feels to be marrying

you. Even the dog feels this
revelation—turns his head
to pant as the wind kicks up,

the way it is wont to do
in late spring, but he doesn't
cower. No matter how hard,

or violent, or excessive, as long
as he can feel it he isn't anything
but a dog on a shaded porch

watching for squirrels. It's been
two years since the robin and her
jakes bolted from their daub

and waddle home, but this deepening
morning we came out to find
eggs smashed on the peeling,

splintering planks of the porch.
The colors of sky and sun and bone,
the dog tried to roll through

the destruction, could smell
the magnetic pull of that which
was never fully realized. You

left a beer can out here last
night, a paper towels as crumpled
as the shell, a light. Moths

spent all evening alighting to their
deaths as we laughed and touched
and pretended we were more than

mortal, for a moment. The light
of day isn't stark, but forgiving.
Whatever detritus we leave

behind, let me hammer
one last bit in: the dog is
right to be afraid, and we

are right to keep going
anyway, keep falling anyway,
keep loving when there's no

proof we won't be
taken out by a high
wind.