

## Bear Lake

Just three lights shine on the opposite shore.  
At ten the waxing moon is only a dim sliver,  
the sky still too bright for me to see stars.  
White pelicans fly low over the water,  
their wings beating slowly, so close  
I can hear feathers against air.  
The stars brighten and the pelicans  
are still flying as I fall asleep.

When I awaken after midnight  
the Milky Way lights the sky to the horizon,  
from Idaho south to the dry Utah hills.  
A plane blinks red and a single  
satellite moves east to west.  
All the rest is stars.

I lie on the desert shore  
watching stars who shone  
billions of years ago.  
Eons from now somebody  
may be watching our star.  
By then we'll probably be gone;  
maybe we'll have blown ourselves away.  
It's hardly important to the Milky Way

whether one star shines—  
but perhaps it matters  
that twilight comes already at four  
that across the lake a porch light comes on  
that already the Milky Way is floating into dawn  
that already one white pelican flies low over Bear Lake  
perhaps it matters—  
all the rest is stars.

## Completely Full

As we board, the flight attendant announces that our plane is *completely full*. I want to ask how it can be more than full, for isn't full by nature complete? We leave Florida completely full, next to me a mother and her son, maybe five.

Two hours later I'm jolted from my nap. The plane bucks with turbulence, bounces, then brakes hard as we land on the icy Newark runway. The whole time the mother holds her son's hand and leans close against him. He says only *it's okay Mom*.

It is this then, the taking of a child's hand that is more than full, more than complete. He puts his other hand on hers. We have landed and the plane taxis to the gate.

## Salt and Sorrow

*A kitchen in a residence in Aleppo, Syria damaged Sunday in fighting*  
Narciso Contreas photo, *The New York Times*

Walls are blackened, there's a refrigerator  
with rust at its bottom, stickers of yellow  
butterflies and blackbirds on its door.

A dish towel hangs on the door handle  
and atop sits a vase of purple paper flowers,  
On shelves jars of spices still stand upright.

We can't see what's upright in the rest  
of the home, if its power is on,  
or if walls and windows are intact.

Charred ceiling plaster covers the floor,  
no mortar shells or shrapnel though;  
a jar of beans lies unbroken and a tiny drawer—

maybe for salt, we don't know, but nobody  
can live without salt or sorrow,  
no matter where. On a lower shelf rest

three small pairs of sneakers—  
we can't see the children,  
their parents or the photographer,

they must all be somewhere.  
Outside—but outside is not in the picture—  
we can't hear if there are explosions and artillery fire.

On the wall hang pans, a strainer and measuring spoons.  
Why do some things fall and not others?  
All the utensils are blackened,

but we can't tell whether from cooking  
or just war. In a dish drainer cups dry;  
they'll need to be washed again  
if the family returns—  
if they live— their blackened  
kitchen sent naked around the world.

## Samarra

A boy looks up at the gold-domed  
mosque in Samarra as he does each morning—  
it's stood a thousand years, it's reflected  
the sun at dawn and dusk, it's echoed  
thousands of morning prayers. He falls  
backward in the explosion, his head crushed  
beneath a fragment of ancient mortar and gold.  
Bricks scream through the air and obliterate  
prayers. The blast shakes minarets  
which sway and crack in the explosion.

One of his eyes looks left to the Euphrates,  
the other to the Tigris, but he doesn't see  
gold leaf that rains down and shimmers in the sun,  
doesn't see dust that rises where the golden dome  
had been. Blood trickles from his mouth;  
who knows to which river it will flow.

I saw it in the news the next day—  
but probably it's already  
been forgotten in the long history  
of Babylon and America,  
another small war,  
not news anymore.

There's prayer as sirens wail:  
Return your artillery and blood  
from the Tigris and the Euphrates,  
reverse the explosions,  
turn back the sunrise.  
Return the child's sight  
so he may watch the golden dome of Samarra  
come gleaming back in the morning sun.

## Squeaky Fromme Remembers

I'm one of only a few women  
who ever fucked Charlie Manson  
I'm one of only two women  
who tried to kill a president  
I wore a red dress  
the day I almost shot Ford  
(I wish I'd shattered his head)  
I loved the world's most famous killer—  
(I wish I'd been the one to stab Sharon Tate)  
plunging deeper and deeper  
deeper and deeper—oh Charlie  
stab me like you did then—  
I had him more  
than Patricia or any of The Family  
the year of my trial  
I got more mail than Charlie  
I was the only woman  
ever to escape from Alderson  
(but they caught me )  
I'm free now  
(parole sucks and I miss the food)  
my photo's in the Ford Presidential Museum—  
you can Google me—  
I get more hits than Charlie  
(sometimes I'd like a hit of acid)  
I did more drugs than Betty Ford  
you know I was in a Broadway Musical?  
Assassins  
the actress wore a red dress  
I'm more famous than anyone in my family  
than anyone in The Family  
except Charlie  
Charlie, Charlie  
I'm free now  
I almost assassinated the President, Charlie  
I'll come in my red dress  
stab me, make me bleed