

FIVE FOR SIXFOLD

In March

we wait.

We wait in the wind, we
walk by ponds in Northeast
grasses: reed canary, bullrush,
bitter panic grass (now endangered)
yellow still, and yet not still
in the wind that dances the oak and
sycamore white, bare branches and
we know, we smell the grassy air,
We wait, we anticipate.

By ponds, streams and lakes
it is the anticipating-- for me at
least-- the longing for things
things improbable that will come:
Your face eyes heart your Self
feels this With me, it is the
anticipating the not-yetness of it
but soon we know the swamp milkweed
purple stemmed aster marsh marigold
will be with us with the first robins,
juncos, green-headed male mallards—these
will join the spring peepers who
savor shellbark hickory and all maples
and we will join them, be— alongside them.

BAD OCTOBER: 2016

When I tell you this October alone
has seen Syrian sisters
and their brothers die
cyanic blue under
chunks of concrete ripped
from the very walls round them
by their ~~very~~ own State
-sponsored bombs and sure
plenty of Russian rockets too
well you tell me life's not fair.

These thugs look to us
in America so they say
inspired by how easy
it was for us to crush
young bones not on
purpose but as a distasteful
side-effect, a 'collateral' of
The Mission—say Vietnam
1968 and
1972-- October
was especially bad those years. There.

Oh, and this October,
2016, six hundred
children --give or take--
Haiti saw erased: choked
battered by boards from
their own treasonous houses
tree and water-rocked:
Hurricane Matthew dumb,
relentless—mothers wail
and dead is dead. Whom
do we put on trial
for all this autumnal
not- fairness?.

Translucent June,

and the fireflies are not yet out
but the slugs inch their way across
our confusing sidewalk toward
the solar system of our circular garden

with its red planet of verbena on
the sidewalk side to the blue Neptune
on the other. En route they pass
below giant clouds of columbine

for them it is a long long journey.

As I turn into the circle of houses
we call home I glance at the nine o'clock
horizon, and again the royal blue
of Hudson River sky a daub of gibbous moon
seems to let the sky through, coloring its
mountains and its craters.

To Toussaint Louverture, Breda Plantation, 1791:

Your *Ayiti*, mon frere Toussaint, your Haiti,
blazes now from the northern Cap to Tiburon,
the fragrant fires of sugar cane
and white plantation bodies
blaze now in Jeremie, Jacmel,
and Port-au-Prince. Blood dries
on the backs of four hundred thousand
slaves now-- your Legionnaires who carry torches
in the black nights-- slaves refusing to be slaves
brandish torches down sandy paths to the verandas
and smoke-houses of the Blancs—Mulattoes, too:
slaves who light, identify, and burn, light and burn.
The French rise too: in Paris, Orleans, Marseilles and
all the *paysage, Normandie* to the *Pyrenees Departements*,
and young Napoleon grows restless in Cagliari
with his fellow troops aching for order and for breath,
Toussaint, he reads of you, Toussaint, in his barracks, but does not
sweat your sweat,
Yet.

Toussaint Explains, Fort de Joux Prison, France, 1803

Forgive me if I say first an emphatic “*je ne regrette rien.*”

I lie here in this prison, in the cold crags of Jura. *Merci*, Monsieur Napoleon, *merci* --for your treachery.

You had me kidnapped through your odious brother in law, LeClerc, now dead in *Ayiti* of yellow fever and heat fatigue while I huddle here in your mountain “hotel” reserved for dignitaries, such as myself, who

inconvenience you with my slave uprising and humiliated you and the toad Leclerc, may he roast in hell. Leclerc with his reinforced army of 80,000 *Blancs*, sent to hunt down my black brothers, sisters and children who had the effrontery,

Honorable M. Bonaparte, to rise up all across our island, led by my lieutenants, to disembowel then set on fire your blood sucking plantation masters, so now the whipped become the whippers and the maroon skies hover above scenes of men

surrounded in pockets by our battalions of liberated slaves. We pin your bluecoats down, cordon them in our Ekmani palm and magnolia thickets fragranced with Tomzanonia orchids, the last sweet smell your poor mercenaries will savor.

And as spring and summer come, the livers of the survivors will have to do combat with our *fièvre jaune*, turning men a nice shade of oily yellow and set them to vomiting on the sides of trails, where your sweet slave-drivers once led my African father and his

people to their lives of sweat and anguish. I think you will not succeed Monsieur Bonaparte. It is you who will sweat--sweat like LeClerc.