

## HAIR

Grows incessantly, more profusely than Bermuda grass,  
 its borders condemning me with the threat of balding.  
 Here and there, but not *there* or *here*, these mousy filaments  
 follow no will, no will of mine in any case. And the itch!  
 Scalp or underarm, the skin's sucked dry for irrigation,  
 the price paid for shining strands, ran through with fingers.

Love, I only suffer my locks that your fingers  
 might enjoy them. Left alone, I'd torch the grass  
 like a Greenpeace activist, and revert the flow of irrigation  
 back to its original river. I'm considering balding  
 on purpose, so my skull might breathe, that this itch  
 might be relieved. The only proof of life in these filaments

is in their dying grey. This shock of keratinized filaments,  
 electrified at your touch. Your callused fingers,  
 keratinized, rough with work, scratch my itch.  
 I wish you could roll around in my mane like grass,  
 though I loathe lawns. You say you'll mourn my bald  
 head when the time comes. I say irrigation

is a costly operation in a time of drought. *Irrigate*  
 is only one letter away from *irritate*. Exposed filaments  
 rust as metal, crust as hair. Worse than a full balding  
 is a monk's sad cap. Rubbing my temples with your fingers,  
 you tell me I'm tense. You think I should smoke some grass,  
 relieve my stress. The best way to cure an itch

is by focusing on something else. In a pinch, a different itch  
 can do the trick. Why not divert my vascular irrigation  
 to my various erogenous zones? Underneath any grass  
 is not dirt, but soil. Not skin, but flesh, flush with filamented  
 nerve-endings, primed to blush as the knowing finger  
 gives life with its touch. Consider it: if I was balding

you could touch my scalp directly. The shapely bald  
skull its own decoration. I'd have no itch.  
I wish you could lift the cap, run your fingers  
through the folds of my brain. It would be no irritation,  
this foreplay to lobotomy. You could sever the filaments  
of choice neurons. The aphrodisiac scent of mowed grass,

leaving my body bald with pleasure. The brain's a prisoner to my itching  
body, its knotted tissues and filaments requiring constant irrigation.  
Let's play in the grass and forget our present troubles, uncovering with our fingers  
the hidden rites of this earth.

## PRAYERS TOWARD A NEW MYTHOLOGY

The lemon keeps growing.

I like to dream—sometimes about what I can't see, sometimes about what I can't have.

Lakes dry up. They only last if frozen over.

I hoped to be my own mother.

In the days of dust, there came a deluge. Fish struggled to breathe. Breathing is a constant struggle against death.

All novels were written by dead people.

Cabbages, meanwhile, rot.

Waste is not given.

I am telling you, prayer is our ethos. Everything outside our knowledge is ruled by magic.

The lemon keeps growing.

## POCKET BIBLE

A painted man,  
drawn across his chest  
*I am a man* in pomegranate-red  
lettering  
his hair  
spackled, stiff  
the paint on  
his cheeks  
crackled in the hot valley  
winds of late spring.

A parade congregated  
on the little hill  
in cold  
sweat—  
he spoke.

Slowly  
the  
rasp of his beer-soaked  
voice  
he wanted the sheep  
the pasture  
the gates  
the earth  
he said  
that we were too hungry  
to enjoy ourselves,  
we live as  
flesh.

An unruly-haired man  
handed out little books  
with glossy orange covers  
I turned pages  
and  
smiled at  
creation  
shuddered  
at

punishment  
I threw  
the book  
in a rusting trashcan  
and God  
threw quarters  
at my sleeping body

## EVEN TOOTHPASTE

can't get this taste  
off my tongue. If I  
stuffed firecrackers

down my throat  
you'd still be hearing me  
complain. I'm hoping

to marry  
rich. I will have access  
to the best

breath  
fresheners & silk  
floss & crystal

jars filled with mints  
on my nightstand. God  
knows I'll need them.

## TRANSFERENCE

I do not know  
 how not  
 to prolong grief. Slipping  
 vanity—last snow  
 drips off

the evergreen's nested  
 needles. Weeks later, baked  
 in the summer's succotash  
 of loam and acorn-shells and flaming  
 daisies, the earth bathes in its memory

of moisture. Dogs tear  
 up dewed-down grass, devouring  
 what they cannot chew. The year  
 before: another hillside, we transplanted  
 bamboo. Killed

by kudzu. What more  
 can I do? I've tried  
 and failed to enjoy  
 love at a distance. My doll  
 is bruised, the pinky toe

frozen from a lack  
 of tribute. Stolen blood, rerouted through  
 my nose. Steady  
 my fever, sweet antidote  
 to drool. Afternoons in Union Square

pigeons harbor  
 my ego, sedate the jaw's  
 enthusiastic trap. Sprinkling cement with  
 my liquid lists, the desperate liver  
 kicks. I'm unkissed. My kidneys: licked crisp