

Birdsong

Rain falls heavy on the ground,
And the cardinal sings somewhere in the dogwood tree.
--Oh to pay attention!
To listen to the clandestine voice of the forest.

I lean close to her
As to hear her gentle voice
And she whispers to me,
In what is the loudest whisper ever,

“Why do you listen, when you could be singing?”

The Three Steps of You Leaving and Coming Back

Step One: you take me down
 to the water where
 you wash your
 hands of
 me,
 and then,
 feeling loads lighter,
 you crane your neck to the sky

and *Shout!* like the hawk you are,
 beating your wings through
 the vast sky that
 you own,
 and then swooping
 down to the ground below
 to swallow up the mice and rats
 and other birds that you also own, *oh king of the sky.*

Step two: you write me across your skin
 like an anthem, feeling the way
 I beat and churn
 and tear
 inside
 your ancient leathered lungs,
 hearing the way I scream inside your varicose heart.

*Do you remember the way your heart felt in its
skeleton cage, as it threatened to burst
out of its container? And do you
remember the way
your marrow
sang
in its bones,
not a melancholy song,
but one of fragile triumph and nervous synergy?*

Step three: you remember
the song and its
sound.

You remember the
way that you felt. You open your
Earth lips and sing our lovely, lilting song.

The Beautiful Birds

Washed up from the bay;
I am driftwood.
I am bound and I am impermanent,
I am beautiful and I am careless.

Salty water seeps from my head into the earth
As I lie
In the grass on the shore by the bay,
As I lie
In the fields that are faded.

My hair is woven into the ground--
I am the roots
And my fingertips are stems,
sprouting and growing
And searching for sunlight
In this faded field
on the shore by the bay,

Where I believe I am surrounded
By the company of friends
Until I notice
That the skies are empty and the birds are quiet
And I lean to my side
To whisper to the resting wolf
that "the world has gone silent"
But the wolf has gone silent also
And beside him are the birds

Who are absent from the sky
And their throats don't hum
And their wings don't flutter
But their feathers still hold
the luster of an old life's glory,

And so I sit beside them
And I sing the songs that they can no longer sing for me.
Hallelujah.

To Better and Warmer Places

I go out into the deep
 winter morning
 Where the sun has
 Not yet risen and I
 Lift my voice up to
 The old wren in his
 Tree, and I say “why
 Do you cease your
 Singing?” and the
 Old wren says back
To me, “you must find
 Beauty in the places
 Where there is none,”
 Before he lifts his
 Wings and flies on
 South to better
 And warmer places.

