

Two Aphids

Has the house on the corner
always been vermilion red?
Just like the back of the still-living aphid
that sap sucking sucker
trapped between screen and pane
of my awning crank window. Turn, turn, stuck;
does your God hear the prayers of insects?

The tired I tolerate is not easily describable:
a stuttering, clumsy, make-him-hurt sleep-step
where my blue-toned under-eyes
are bridal white now
because blood stopped flowing up
to save the feet below
that still have to move, on special occasions.

If only I could prioritize so precisely,
without emotion, just instinctual action
but instead: buy new fitted sheets
with stubborn manufacturing lines
suffocating inside a cellophane bag
sleep, sleep, divorce with recreational teas
and herbal drugs.

You won't let our dog Sally
lie on the couch
but you screwed a work-girl
down there on the cushions
so I really don't know what's off-limits,
what's even possible now,
for that aphid, or you.

Genesis Ribs & Wings

you killed my sick chicken
that's all it took to fall for you

I added backyard hens to my woodshed;
a Madison hipster.

Religion in southern Wisconsin is biking to holy brunches
of farm-raised salmon on beds of fleshy arugula

what color were your hands
after the slaughter?
I ask
because blood looks different on everyone
and I'm still waiting to study your skin

kind of you, to wrap the dead hen
in a floral dishcloth, the Shroud of Turin;

though you wouldn't know about that,
because your Easters are red ales and spiral hams.

The bird's funeral was brief, but reverent:
I think about the service when dividing hostas atop her grave

should have consumed
a tender eulogy of beef jerky and pork rinds with you.

Wish my husband
offered such direct masculinity

but his knife, rests at the throat,
of church choir high notes.

Husband-Adam is still perfect
in His image:

didn't even interrupt
when a woman laid her love-liness atop mine

that Creation Christmas
in a classier than expected Comfort Inn

though who of anyone
wild or mild
would stop two
goddamn gorgeous women?
Ain't no deniers of that faith.

All three of you correctly evangelized:
I'm not a real farmer, or a Biblical scholar.

For the birds, this attraction to everyone;
duality, in an unbalanced trinity

with God perched on my shoulder
leaning over to braid my hair

as my husband,
supportive,

and scripture-read,
stirs chicken risotto on the stove.

After Eleven Summers, She Said She Never Really Loved Me Anyway

when your insides
still recognize another
automatically
syncing during the day
cardio-exercising
to avoid acquired heart disease
the only way forward
is robotics:
find a simulacrum
of sturdy aluminum
to do the ticking
and beating
for you

Faded Green

I am afraid
of Ireland.

Psychoanalysts agree, wagging thee:

unstable euro
thinning dollar
Brexit bullshit
border guards
queen's opinion
religious tension
rowdy Cork lads
craggy sheep-shit lanes
opinionated Dublin drunks
colour-coded Belfast neighborhoods
unpopular view of all things American and British and somehow Asian, too,
God help the purity of the Emerald Isle! May she stay jewel'd and potato'd forever!

I say *no*. also, *christ*:
not any of that.
Maybe you are comprehensively anxious
about light treason and unjust sanctions?

Simply,
I am afraid
to see our honeymoon place
where we laughed ten years ago
in love
with matching backpacks
and rented bicycles
because nothing is like *that*
anymore.

25 Years Later

Even now, I talk chopped // small bursts are easy to release // I'm not
in smoke-stitched sweaters // I outgrew // thin fuzzy gym shorts // I can't count
grocery money from Feds // I have investments // I grew // I have billions // (I do not)
sleep in a bed someone else bought // Though I do sleep, sometimes.

I still feel // the panic of a snarl-headed girl // fourth grade // I need glasses
can't circle her state // can't see that far // but can still find
solace in custody-dad tires // arriving at the school yard // I love public education //
good teachers save you // Jesus could not, but state aid did.

Even now // with teal household pottery // glazed by poor Navajo hands
about my age // When all of that other life happened.

Even now // with Aran Island scarves // fitness punch cards
groceries delivered by drones // crisp white pants requiring special detergent //
And a bed that holds the weight, dreams, and children of two.

a friend stops by with cake

will she smell smoke
from 25 years ago
unfurling from my closet
and will she meet

that other, captive me?