

*Gate*

I take time to bed  
Hunger compresses time  
My sleep eyes open to hunger  
Daylight is transparency  
A blue crystal of virtue  
I lean on the windowsill  
The antechamber of waking  
I hold stones  
Grouped together like eggs  
In my palm for inspection  
Light gets a closer look  
It has no use beside this  
Stones shape light to describe time  
Sleep makes a pearl of time and night  
I set the stones back on the sill  
At the threshold of passage  
Where they take daylight  
And smooth it into time

*Expedition*

We saw it first from the kitchen window.  
You lifted the opera glasses.  
The day was just beginning to exhume its ancestors.  
The sky fogged with dew.

We devised a plan involving  
Rope and PVC-coated gloves,  
Four of us in the canoe,  
Funereal hush.

Its eyes were still unclouded.  
Two hours, we guessed, maybe three.  
You wore a respirator and so you tied its feet;  
I took the other end of the rope and rowed back

To the pond's limen,  
That collector of vagrant waters,  
A water-world rising from dry ground.  
The functions of God and animals played out in miniature.

We dragged the deer ten feet over mud.  
I tucked my tailbone and lifted with my legs.  
It landed with a thump that settled the contents  
Of its body, of our bodies,  
Of the wet truck bed.

You looked three times over your shoulder,  
Switched to four wheel drive.  
When we'd made the gate we dismounted.  
We gripped the deer's ankles crossing the stream.  
The water had an attraction to death.  
At the center of the valley, we left it.

The coyotes, vultures,  
Rains came.

I walked back a week later over the stream  
To the center of the valley and found only  
Flattened grass, the distance of boundary.

*A Reunion*

Father, in your blue denim shirt  
You walked out of the Thai restaurant  
Before we'd paid.  
We were all in a foul mood.  
I hadn't seen you for years  
And this was not what I'd expected.  
Our sister lay on a hospital bed  
Somewhere dark in the gray building  
We waited to enter.  
Before the restaurant,  
I had let escape from my hands  
A friend's unborn baby.  
It flitted up and out  
Of the room, a tiny insect.  
We'd searched for it  
And found it asleep in a cork.

My sister had a beat-up old Jeep  
Whose door we couldn't close.  
She was trying to call her girlfriend  
And I was trying to close the door.  
You stood apart from us,  
Looking off toward the hospital.

The pavement was distance between each of us  
And the distance was dream because you were there.

You do not eat at Thai restaurants  
And you do not walk out of anywhere.  
In your new home you sleep,  
Sleep, sleep.

*Duet*

Blacj

Fretless; requisite harmony

Two notes (compact, emotive)

My strings guile with “  
ice bats” flapping wings

We repeat stanzas

We watch them point at the moon

blajk

Unharmony; optionally fretted

Less than tones

‘moon’ reads us  
Newly flightless, Our guile strings us up  
They point at us darkly

Black

Frightened star; compact, darkly (

‘ice bat’) harmonious

Repeatedly pointed at,

His stanzas flap their wings to the moon

On the guile of strings’ two notes