

**Bovine Paranoia**

I'm sure it's different for everyone,  
but for me, it began like this: You're scared,  
but you tell the Angus beside you  
anyway, and he just snorts dismissively  
says that in profile  
faces only *look* like they're winking.  
But you're unconvinced,  
and you don't *want* to bring  
it up again, but it keeps happening.  
The sheep start doing it, and pigs  
do it, too; then a farmer does it, then a tractor,  
and the worries you feel about what  
*others* will think are eventually outweighed  
by what all of this means for *you*  
if what you think you're seeing  
is *actually happening*. Your four stomachs  
churn each time you catch someone's eye,  
until you finally can't take it anymore,  
and you dare to speak about this phenomena  
with others, but of course, that psychotic  
Guernsey pipes up and says  
*you're* the one who's way off base.  
And everyone laughs, but  
no one knows what to do,  
and you think, *What else can you do,*  
*but speak up?* See, whether or not  
you've accurately remembered  
the moment last week when you saw  
the *wheat field* winking at you  
just before it began to rain...  
you're sure there was a flash  
and then finally, definitively—  
thunder. Yes, it now occurs to you  
that the only thing that's really true  
is that you're soggy and uneasy,  
and that there is no way  
you're going to be able to spend  
every single moment  
of a lifetime of afternoons  
like this.

## Loss

It's never how we imagine:  
a daughter can, perhaps,  
see her father returning  
home from a long year  
in a dusty place, his beard  
matted with black blood,  
his eyelids locked tight.

Though she knows  
this won't be how she will  
actually see him when he returns,  
it's a way  
to prepare herself.

But loss sneaks out  
from the dark corners  
of a Thursday morning  
when her mother  
doesn't wake her  
for school, and her hero  
father comes back early  
with his hair neatly trimmed  
and his oaky legs unscarred.

Months pass in silence,  
and she finds that the only things  
her father can bring himself to touch  
for more than just a moment  
are the creamy shells of eggs  
sleeping peacefully  
as the dull kitchen lights  
buzz somewhere overhead.

**In Havelock's Pub - Nairn, Scotland**

I'm pretty sure it's English  
he's speaking, but I can't make out  
a word, so I'm nodding  
and drinking, trying to hide this fact.  
His words are a deluge  
and his eyebrows arc into caterpillars  
as his leathery hand points  
like a gun: forefinger at my empty  
glass, thumb at the ceiling.  
I nod, and a smile burrows out  
from beneath his gray mustache.  
He laughs as he bangs my pint glass  
on the bar three times.  
The bartender nods.  
Apparently, I've just ordered  
another pint.

I don't know what he saying,  
but I want to believe he's telling me  
how he survived the war  
and how he learned to talk about it  
once it was over, that he's speaking  
about how hard the rain fell  
the day he met his wife, about how soft  
her hands were the first time  
she touched his shipwrecked face,  
and that he's confiding in me  
that sometimes the sea  
unfolds itself  
only to him.

**I Learn Prince Harry's Junk is Going to be in the Newspaper**

*-after Frank O'Hara*

Apparently, he was gyrating away  
and then suddenly he stopped singing  
and dancing to flip off the camera  
and you said there was thunder  
from across the sea, the Queen's anger  
you said. And I said  
but thunder pounds you in the chest  
hard, so it was not really thunder  
and there was no lightning,  
but I was in such a panic about 'news'  
like this permeating the air  
about how 'society' was acting  
precisely like the sea  
churning and foaming  
that I saw a newsman  
levitating, mid-air  
on a forty-foot television screen say,  
"Prince Harry is naked in Vegas!"  
And look, I know I haven't been  
to *that* many casinos,  
but even *I* know saints aren't canonized  
at Caesar's, and I know there are no comets  
seen in the Bellagio's bathroom.

*I have*, however, had my picture in the paper.  
O Prince Harry, we love you  
please put your clothes on.  
seems to unfolds itself  
only to him.