

Not Drowning

On my back like a corpse, enjoying buoyancy,
I drift downstream as Amtrak, hooting, passes over.

I wave at passengers from the city,
peering down at me with concern.

I wave so they know I'm not dead,
but floating. All my life I've waved at passersby.

All my life I've been swimming, not drowning,
despite any appearance to the contrary.

Not a God

I realize, now, my analyst is a person.

Is separate from myself.

Is not a god.

And this thought saddens me

as I am left without her fire

or gilded throne.

Alone with just my own simple chair,

weathered rungs of maple.

And out the window

all those stones of winter.

The Orchard on Its Way

I wish it would slow,
not the train, but the ponies
shivering in a rain-soaked pasture,
a hundred geese fluttering
in a soggy field,
the eagles we saw this morning
from a station in Vermont,
their wild mating dance—
not the train, but the passing
into memory—I want it all
to last, the chimney falling
back to bricks,
the orchard on its way to bud,
the kiss you gave me
twenty miles back.

My Own Hand

It's a cappuccino
kind of day,
my way to medicate,
I've come to understand,
my own hand which lifts to me,
as if to say, *Darling*.

Cavafy

So much work awaits,
my small room littered with books,
half-written papers, mid-unit
evaluations, applications, essays.

Still, I go out,
sit in the coffee shop all day
reading Cavafy's poems,
lost like him
to all but the sensuous life.

I cross slippery streets,
slide down two avenues
through icy tunnels,
under low-leaning branches,
to reach the old Greek coffee shop.

The great gay poet
wrote of his shame, his
strong desire for men,
could have been killed
for his love.

My window seat
offers a view out—or in—
as ice drops
from the roiled heavens.