

## MOUNTAINS AGAIN

Something I need  
only wild places give me.

Unfeeling the ground, I climb Vision road  
with eyes clouded, the mountains  
gone.

At the top of the ridge the ocean wind  
blasts cold and stony with rain—I duck into  
a deertrail off the ridge, level and soft  
with pine needles, the wind  
turned gentle in the tall Bishop pines.  
They creak and rock  
like masts in a harbor.

The dark green wilderness flames  
with a faceless presence, leaves whispering  
their pleasure. I whisper  
my pain, my care-held shoulders  
softening, breath re-joining  
the tufts of fog sailing through.  
The forest is present as a lover.

I feel the beauty open me without fear, ferns  
and foxgloves nodding, sweetgrass and huckleberry,  
Douglas iris scattered like stars—all unforgetful of  
something, the original paradigm, densely blossoming  
as everything. I feel a home ground begin  
to thaw in me, returning the feel of earth  
underfoot, blowing the fog from my eyes, returning me  
to a stream's pace  
under the wandering branches  
of live oaks draped with  
phosphorescent moss, madrones  
smooth as skin.

Down down the network  
of deer trails, switching back and forth,  
taking the strongest cut  
through wind-stunted pines wild

with personality, twisting  
manzanita the rain has turned  
red as wounds.

The way opens in transmutations  
into generous footpaths of  
ochre clay, granite gravel, becoming  
again a village road  
winding past wooden cottages  
with chimneys smoking—I see my own road  
as if for the first time,  
and for a moment  
I'm surprised at how  
I started out tired and cold  
and hungry.

## NEW COLORS

The cabin is a lantern glowing  
through dark woods, half-lit by  
turquoise moonlight. Wandering  
my way through my impossible  
landscape, a friend like you  
is half the distance.

You greet me in a usual way,  
but it comes from the back of your heart  
to mine, welcoming all of me.  
We sit at the generous  
oak table with tea, the wood stove's  
sanctifying warmth and dancing  
light—a silent invitation calls  
the lost shades of my rainbow home.

*What does your heart hold back?*

We feel our way through dark hallways  
together, find the haunted rooms, the parts of us  
afraid of the light. We feel together  
the unbearable, the banished ghosts, the half our feelings  
we have no names for—we recognize them  
in each other, and it cures us  
of being the only one.

*What turns your body against itself?*

We follow the carved mountain ranges, witness  
the fearsome faces. We let the forgotten  
places be found again, where a baffled river pools.  
The river wants to flow through all of us—we feel for  
the rock it swirls against, witness  
its story, let it shift into its place  
among the stones of the riverbed.

*What shadow's portrait are you ready  
to trace, and so outgrow it?* There's the saboteur  
standing in the crowd of me, so attractive,  
so familiar. It's dressed like a shepherd, but its crook  
hems in even the homeward  
instinct, dazzled by its care. We honor

its reasons without harm, and it becomes again  
a mother's fear, a father's lost eyes, becomes  
another wave seeking the shore of the heart.

Dawn in the branches, the sky  
pale gold and green. Our  
chairs hold all of us now, our colors  
holding hands again, blending into  
something new.

## REMEMBRANCE

When your heart is sick with feeling  
like the universe's unwanted  
child, may you go to a place that shines  
with origins, feel its tributaries  
pulsing in you.

May you walk an early path  
as the silence finds you  
and the chirp of osprey, stillness  
filling you like it fills the great  
oaks. And a wealth of kinship  
pools in you  
like a rising tide.

Or there in a city's labyrinth  
wandering until  
a primeval pattern lights up  
in a bridge's joinery, hieroglyphs flash  
in starlings' murmurations, and the sun-sung  
breeze begins to rock you back  
into your heart again.

Gently as a parent wakes a child  
for an early morning departure,  
something wakes a part of you  
which even your dreams  
had forgotten.

May you return with everything  
you came here for  
rising up in you, flowing out  
in all directions.

## ANAM CARA

In you I can see myself  
better than a mirror. In the steady  
lantern light we take turns holding,  
our cards turn clear, reveal themselves  
as shared—fear and anger, shame  
and sorrow, lose the fangs  
of their blackmail. In this love  
unearned, un-loseable  
and lifetimes-ballasted, the ancient  
child of our spirit blooms  
out of hiding, no longer  
uninvited. And the angles of my  
house are righted.

There is a world just inside  
this one—a place every song  
is trying to remember, whose  
heavy doors only  
two or more of us can open.

## OTHERLESS LOVESONG

In the iridescent darkness, the lovers  
grasp each other like hands in prayer. Something  
hanging on to a branch too high  
for too long begins to let  
go, as they taste in each other  
a shared wellspring. And it begins to waken  
all around and through them, this edgeless  
presence, something grasped  
by opening hands, only known  
by being it, a love that grows  
as we give it away, scatter it  
generous as sunshine.