

1. Taking Out the Trash

In studying quantum theory scientists at the Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands have discovered that objects separated by great distance can instantaneously affect each other's behavior.

I'm a satellite slipping its orbit as I step outside, grateful
for the frozen silence—a reprieve from heat, noise,
the newspaper-strewn carpet and dirty dishes inside.

I know from lessons long ago that the gray metal of this garbage can
is a dance of particles and repercussion and that nothing is wasted;
ice into water into air, mouse into hawk into energy streaming across
the frozen tundra of my driveway as night comes down

on this moonless plain like a hood on the head of a falcon—
yet all somehow wed to that sunny star which flares forth.
I round this truth to the curb, follow my snow-blurred tracks back

to that homely constellation of clutter, open the door to discover
that a blaze of sun transmuted as firelight has broken into my house,
illuminating our fleshy lives as desire and its acolytes
of sweat and sex will soon ignite and blaze.

2. To the Mailbox and Back

A snowdark sky and storm
from the west as an advancing herd
of black clouds stampedes,
does not part at my coming.

Snow stings my skin,
pummels me broadside as I pull
hugs and kisses from the dented box,
turn back, leave my boots

to gape at the door. Inside
I strike a match in the fireplace,
tear open the envelope, gather
the bright east to my heart's hearth.

3. After Cataract Surgery

The peach tree in my back yard
breasts with sweetness, clucks
to herself in fat liquid vowels

as the sun renders each vein visible,
each leaf translucent
and trembling with the weight of light.

Full-bellied peaches hang down,
rounding and rosy, just before they let go
and fall of their own weight.

When I stoop to pick one up I see
a small white shell, a third of the egg
gone, a hatchling having pecked its way

from tight detention into a surfeit
of light and air, that wet scrap of flesh
panting while its sparse feathers dry,

unable to hold up its head on a weak stalk
of neck, its heart, small as a seed pulsing
under tissue-thin skin and I remember

how after surgery I saw flashes
at the edge of my vision, my eye
seeing itself, the doctor said

as this earth might be seeing itself
through the hatchling's glaucous eyes
quivering to stay open.

4. Hosannas

Crouched in a shallow font of pale dust
a new church in a raw suburb
points its one sharp finger at the sky.

Inside hymns and prayers erupt
from our throats like startled crows,
beat against walls and windows while

across the road in abandoned pastures
ten thousand tribes of grass rise up
and bow down whispering their ancient hosannas.

5. Wild

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As if the earth puffed out a small sigh,
bluets appear,
but as you gaze at them in the dirt, behold—
a diminutive sky of four-petaled stars,
each with a drop of gold at its center.

*

Lilac-gray, the color of mourning, wild phlox
foam at the edge of woods, seep through
bright grasses, ooze from the earth itself.
Not tears exactly but a reminder
that sorrow is yin to the earth's alleluia.

*

Queen Anne's Lace nods from dusty roadsides,
knows no friend. A knotted-lace handkerchief
you can't weep into, it won't save you—
witness to what you cannot bear it almost
utters the one word you long to hear.