

## TEMPERATE ZONES

Osaka 34°41'N, 135°31'E

-2°C/28°F, snow

A peacock leaves for India where peahens allegedly match him in beauty.  
He flies very far, over the zoo moat, southwest – the snow is still high, no peahens,  
Only creatures that look like his caretakers, but smaller and cheekier,  
Like the ones who come to annoy him on Sundays.  
They stare at him with raisins on their faces, then tear at the gems on his plumage.  
One little thing forgets all about toilet training, delighting in ravish.

A sensei entertains a long-haired, kilted guest from Scotland.  
Kumiko runs in with a garish feather, Majolica-cheeked, a whiff of ammonia about her,  
Granddad, a peacock visited us in the kindergarten this morning!  
Peacock colors hurt my worn retina, says the sensei, I feel safer with humbler birds.  
With your skirt, hair and slight build, he says to the guest, I'd thought you were a woman,  
Until in the bath this morning, a sparrow flapped out of the hedge below your navel.

Leipzig 51°20' N 12° 22' E

10°C/50°F, light drizzle

If we want to talk about animate things, you must have it now, the brusque doctor says,  
So take this pill and go to the park till it works.  
A womb is a reticent sack withholding the truth that we try to coax out with sonograms,  
So no one really knows what's going on inside. We can't see  
If the amniotic fluid has turned green, or if guerilla bacilli lurk in ambush.  
Modern medicine prefers having a woman and a child side by side,  
Nicely separate and easy to contemplate.  
Come on, take it, the husband says, at least we are talking about living things,  
After all these years of feeding the stars.

The flowerbed has daisies and daffodils but white fringed tulips are best, "swan wings".  
Give me swan wings on this day every April –  
Whatever things we will be talking about tomorrow.

Bristol 51° 27' N, 2° 35' W

22°C/72°F, clear at midday

The wanton ebb-time in June.  
To smuggle myself onto this man's beach sheet, I forced the wedlock of longitude.  
The sea lies with her teal skirts rolled up high towards La Manche;  
Her petticoat lace threadbare, she flaunts countless vulvas of brine, tepid pockets for toes.  
From here, pale freckled women were stolen, hauled along the ever warmer Atlantic  
To the slave markets of Tunis or Marrakesh.

A sheik's eunuch tried the ware with a bronze effigy of his master's manhood,  
To avoid wasting big money on fits too loose or too tight.  
After meeting a new concubine, the sheikh liked to broaden his mind  
By gleaning off his much more travelled bronze part the scents of the discarded women,  
Who in all other respects had been beautiful; by now, someone else's property.  
It was a special pleasure to secretly own the first serial rights.

Toronto 43° 42' N, 79° 20' W

13°C/55°F, humid, overcast

The onlookers' North Faces are as gray as the wild pigs in the pen on display.  
In rich chocolate mud, striped oinking litter kneads the teats of a tired sow.  
Father boar stands tusked, dignified, nonchalant against an oak.  
Sow number two makes him a bed of dry copper leaves. He patiently waits,  
Then plunges onto the bed and she makes a leaf blanket for him, tucks him in.  
The hog falls asleep on the audience of dozens.

Macho, Mormon, pasha! swears a woman, her Dior in fatal syzygy with pig stench.  
At your whim, I put on your fucking pumps, making a fool of myself, rants her husband,  
Marching with other morons For a Mile in Her Shoes, to the clangor of cameras!  
My mother still can't believe I'm just pussy whipped not gay,  
And I still can't believe I'm pussy whipped, a registered wild boar hunter.

In the coop across the pig pen, a white owl holds a freshly strangled chicken in her beak.