

Commute

In a commute
Of the strange
How many years
Of breeding
Left? It's a cruel
April. With rain
And an elegy for the calm
In cluttered spaces—
Essays for an attempt.

It isn't
Found. Here—
The dream
With the chickens
Living in their dropped
Movements.

And the house
that can't hear
the ocean
or the train
where it sleeps.

Ash Wednesday

The Catholic guilt makes my head an ashtray. The girl asks if someone put a cigarette out on my forehead. The boy asks me to come to his Protestant church. He has a crush on me. I like him too, so I tell the guidance counselor he tried to convert me. The man asks me to go to his mother's funeral. It is in a Southern Baptist church. There is too much preaching not enough grieving. The mother asks if I have seen the inside of a church since moving to this town. I say, "No, not exactly." But I have seen a church in the eye of a blind woman's dog. And I've seen one at a bus stop. I too might be the inside of a church.

Hiding Season

The mouse
scooted across the bathroom
and died.
I think I screamed it to death.
And you care more about the mouse
less about me.
More about Elliott Carter's death.

How can she be afraid of a mouse
with so much dying through
the holes and cracks
as this earth turns back into itself.

This is the hiding season
and we look for a warm place.

Ballot

Heat clicks
on. But we don't feel
the money. Not with all the windows
and tunnels and freights
flipped on the side.
Spill. Displace. Pay.
And there is a flood

in my dream place.
Where I once was a dream
taken away in an ambulance.
A fake heart attack.
Just panic.
Like a Tuesday in panic
with my lady parts on the ballot.

Daughter in Exile

She is an apparition
so leave the crumbs

she may want back inside one day
or to escape further into a petal.

Parents sat her beside too many religions.
She made a face,

and it stayed. She made sure they knew
she was miserable.

This makes them miserable too;
she hopes.

Daughter in exile walks around
with the earth in her throat—

a bobbing drift without a tether
a shore line without the shore

a shore line without the line.
But they still want to hold her babies

one day, but children won't exist.
Her blood won't create the dying life.