

bouquet

in my lifetime I've drawn, perhaps,

five hundred flowers -

none of them perfect

What's perfect?

your chest against my back.

the way I count your breath

in rounds of four

soft and slow

like petals

prepare for impact

the enola gay appeared last night,
while brushing my teeth.

some thoughts arrive as surprises

some nights, the room's weather invites
as I strip - collapse next to you.

forgetting how such innocent names
belong to such very large destructions

Halloween, 1995

Christmas arrived in October that year.

my father and I,
stepping in link-chain procession up the street,
his firm hand engulfing mine.

I was, perhaps, six or seven –
secured in his mild presence,
busily examining costumes,

the shapes of leaves backlit by streetlamps,
the bottled glow of plastic pumpkins,
the shrieks and laughter –
rising, falling.

I asked for tokens at each doorway;
I learned to look past
what introduces itself as fear,
what wraps meaning up in shadow.

masks and questions and
Rest in Peace
can be a gift; arriving in October
among dollar store cobwebs and warm hands

and the clear, crisp
sense
that this joy
never finishes with us at all.

Ten (Just Like Water)

oppressive chlorination,

utter concentration.

Crayons.

scarves too itchy-hot,

hunger arriving like a train,

puffs of breath in schoolyard rhythm .

the sun, beating red through eyelids.

your joints, easy and open as

morning arrives –

bringing days so dense and pliant;

they felt

just like water

for Michael

Don't

Shoot

(don't shoot)

don't shhh, don't shhh, don't

shoot shoot shoot

don't shut Down

don't shut street Down

don't plead, don't steal ,

don't lie life Down.

Don't.

shhh beast, shhh being

still, still being.

Bullets beat him Still.

Stop

It's a trap

Stop

it's a trap, don't repeat (after shhh, after shoots, after me)

Don't beat sea out of me

Beat out bullets & salt & weep

Beats & salty beaches

Still

with salt of sea or sweet of weep.

O please

don't shoot, don't shoot ,don't shhh shhh shhh shhh