

Proximity

The rabbit parts, taken out of the context of the rabbit,
will sit on the counter in their juices, hinting at stew,
and they will look good and hale and nutritious to him,
and they will look like awful, bloody murder to her.

And the differences will hang between them,
not as something to be fought over,
but as something there and real and true.

Something that binds if it does not fall apart,
for they will not resolve their differences;
the resolution will come in the way
their differences lie up against one another in the night.

One Day

I can hear the birds chirping,
it's been months since it was warm enough
to open the window, years since it was empty enough
for me not to be here, we sweated in bed last night,
not what you think, and I farted what felt like
every five minutes, the forces inside me fighting
another of their battles, the terms of whose cessation
mean another day of survival, another day of hunger
between us, our hunger for one another
pushing other hungers aside.

Days like this seduce us, a day like this seduces,
how warm and welcoming its light, spring has come
on the heels of fifteen snows and your body is
the window into what I want to spend the rest of my life
learning how to love, even when you lean in close
and accidentally crush my Adam's apple
deep into my throat, oh,

lodge there, lodge there, and when you go, if you go,
take me apart, take this whole heart with you,
I don't care if it isn't possible, I don't care
if lives weren't made to end together,
life is lives splitting and merging, your breath is
my breath in my other body, my breath is
your breath in your beloved body,
I don't care if they think I'm crazy,
I don't care if it isn't possible,
none of this was possible until
one day it suddenly was.

Life with Her

A species came and went. All species came
and went. Life, the whole of it, form and movement,
matter and what it runs on—all going, going,
going, into the being we are. Meanwhile,
my wife is sick, so I brew her tea, let the water
cool before pouring that it may taste less bitter,
more agreeable, more comforting—

the pit of me radiant with anticipation,
the thought of pressing my lips
to test her fever—

I wait and watch the cooling pot
to spike the infusion with affection
on its way to the part of her I can love
but not touch. She has many such parts,
and I thank them all for giving me
not someone, not anyone, but her,

specifically her to love.

Give Me Her and Her My Love

God,

with everything that word means
and everything it can't,
with everything that can be meant
and everything beyond meaning,

dear essential endlessness of me
and my annihilation: listen:

if it ever comes to this,
don't take my wife,

or her health,
or her happiness,
or her great capacity for care and compassion
before me:

take poetry, take sight, take my penis,

take everything I can live without
and still feel the way I do for her

and leave me that,

whatever I may further
owe you for the taking,

and if you some day
settle your sights
again on her,

don't, please,

and if my pleading is of no use,
consider every part of me on offer
to spare her your cruel blades,

take my health, ruin my mind,
rob me of sanity, comprehension
the merest physical ability,

take my life if you must,

just let me die in love with her
and let that love
stay with her to ease her grief,

then do your mighty damnedest
to fill her days with small,
meaningful pleasures,

give her all she ever wished to have
of the world's natural wonders,

then give her so much more,

give her everything
my uncontainable love for her
contained when she was near me.

Love, Again

In their weave along the days of marriage,
our fingers lock, my left and your right,
as they should, several times a day,
and we stroll along the cobbled

streets of New York, the imperfect bricks
left exposed for charm and charmers,
for widows and widowers split
between worlds, for lovers

like us who feel the uneven path beneath us,
the tides crashing between us, buffeting
our dreams and what we make in
the space that could not be

dreamt. I take a breath for all these lungs are
worth, test their limits and sigh: I cannot
get enough of this moment, but I do:
enough is what's given;

excess is what's taken when the sights leave
our eyes, the palms leave our hands,
the music still rings in our heads
after concerts and our

hearts beat more strongly the next morning
after sleep and so on until we let go
our bodies and lapse into
the sumptuous

silence just after: after sex, after life, after
long breath between bodies—look:
the afternoon sun pours
its yellow milk

down the alley and the young spring grass
in the fields we called home must be
tearing in the teeth of our old,
knobby goats. To not

use them for milk—you swore it proper kindness—
I understand now why you wanted only to
love them, watch over them, help
them eat and ask nothing,

nothing at all but affectionate company as
we turn into each other and turn each
other into earth and turn earth into
what: don't let go my hand.