

Miracle in Suburbia

If I were a poet
I would play the drum
while my son plays his imaginary games
and he would start to dance
and we would run out to see that the sky had changed
and that the birds were listening.

If I were a poet I would play the drum
while Jimmy washed dishes,
and drums would play in my head
as we made love
and when I awakened at dawn
I would write.

If I were a poet
I would write from some desire
more sexual than intellectual
and the words would be the words
of the bad girl/earth mother/angel
who is currently unemployed.

And this poem would be her application
and this poem would be her supplication
for a miracle in suburbia
that rain would fall again in the desert,
that friends parted at birth would find each other
that the rhythm that a day can hold
would play for me again.

Children of Violence

They say in a family of violence
some identify with the abuser, some with the abused—
exploiter and exploited seem to be the only choices.

We wanted to be hippies,
to drop out of that duality.
We would take back the means of love and work,
make new families, make bread, farm,
shun meat, cars and war.

But we did not know how to be poor
and still feel rich inside

and so it was a beautiful, brief running away
until fear and greed brought us home.

The Long Breath of Sleep

The long breath of sleep which takes us in and mends us
then breathes us out into the day anew
blinking in the light

is wasted on the cacophony of stop and start
the clamor of too many instruments
hell-bent to entertain

the gaze out the window broken
the reflective mind unreflecting
an addiction of interruption.

Oh go back
to doing
one
thing
well
and then the next
and next

as in a great dance
in which
you gaze
into the eyes of each
then turning
passing
to the next
and next
until
joined with the consort of dreams
you pass
through the sacred arch of sleep
again.

If We Were to Speak as Poets

If we were to speak as poets
you would take my hand and lead me
past the borders of the house
to the places that you dream of at night
the places of your stories
you would tell me the stories of those places
where you became who you are before we met.

And I would unloose the flow of language
and talk to you as I speak now only to myself
until a river of images flowed between us
and you felt what it was like to be a woman.

And the river of your stories
and the river of my heart's unspoken dreams
would remind us of another river
where we stood together in green water,
stood in the orange shadows of canyon walls,
and tasted each other for the first time.

Ourselves, Eternal

I once forgot I had sisters
Abandoned our gardens all Fall,
Locked myself in and let the place
Grow entangled with men and weeds.

But they forebore, unloved shrubs,
Seed-forms in dried pods.
I made a pilgrimage to an oak grove
And prayed for their renewal.

Suddenly that night a rain came
Which washed the streets of leaves
And filled the air with the scents
Of sweet earth and damp pavement.

My sisters arrived the next morning
Under reeling blue, gigantic skies
One by one, slow, in shiny cars
To give me greetings.

We danced a circle in the cold, bright air
Barefoot on the wet lawn
For a moment, just ourselves
For a moment, eternal.