

Zooming with the Mystic

She knows you're worried, the woman says (just met her on zoom)
(background: rust-colored Franz Kline knock-off weaving, green lamp, walls).
I admit it's true I am worried. But
your mother is telling you, don't be worried, there's no place
set at the table where she is, which when I
ask where that is she says she can't explain it, it's not
like something a person could explain. My
father, giant sized in real life, isn't there, backed off for once, lets
my mother do the talking, never the norm when they were real
and touchable, eating toast and sunning in their garden: white
rope hammock and delphinium, bees. You
spend more time alone, my mother observes— highly ironic as that
is what she herself craved like candy, like gin and tonic
with wedges of lime, like rich dark chocolate: time
alone, precious and rare, time alone: a song on the radio, a chime...
magazines piled to the pickled rafters, brochures, maps, reports on songbirds;
his magnetic majesty sitting by the fire in an antique chair,
worrying, loving too much or maybe just worrying.
Why did you leave so soon, I ask my mother through
this Brooklyn shaman who can hear my mother's voice, my mother who says
she was as surprised as we were, says when
it's your time it's best not to resist. Meanwhile,
father wrings his hands, leaves us alone, perhaps
busy with other things than a daughter full grown,
full like a glass of honey with questions, taking

it in just not seeing it not seeing it not seeing it.

The Resort at Garden of the Gods

My son found a condom under his bed.

The carpet was stained and the shower leaked
in the room they gave my daughter and her friend.

We told the receptionist who made the mistake
of asking how was our stay and we told her
about the acai bowl, not even cool

by the time it reached the table, told her
about the wait for lunch and the
too-high cost of the shuttle, which
given the price of this place
should really be free. She
listened and wrote it all down, what we said

on a pad of paper. I said
there were some good things, too,
like the pool and Staci the dinner server
who touched our shoulders as she passed
and told us she is happier now that
she's not a social worker in New Mexico.

All I see, though, now, are those rocks—
pocked orange spires singing into the sky—
fingers pointing, ancient gods at rest, but watching,
nothing to complain about, nothing, nothing,

forever and ever, amen.

Hogpile

Me at three, me at four, me at five,
golden braids, pigtails and
a pony and a garden and a grandmother.
Me at six and school and pencils and
slides, friends and swimming holes.

Hogpile. Hogpile of me at every age
but on the other hand, I am not here but rather,
in the background
like a big wall, a big sun, a big mountain
on fire with love for you all.

No one is gonna get by this firewall, this cement
blockade, so you all, you all you pretty
girls and young women and even you
in middle age with a baby on your hip,
you can hogpile too, while the sun comes up

and the puppy barks and we can't hear
because we are deep into in this dream
piled on top of one another,
layers of love, soft, entwined, living it, safe, pillowed, twirling
as much as we can, as much as we want.

The Undulating Mirror (a villanelle)

Slender, silver and distorting on the graying wall,
I spied you in Chinatown (Chicago)
with Jill and the Nordines and Paul.

Silver like a disco ball,
keeping secrets,
slender, silver and distorting on the graying wall.

Spring and summer, winter, fall,
you hang there, regal, twisted, chic and tall,
with Jill and the Nordines and Paul.

You cost a lot of money, but I heard the Siren call—
and had you shipped where now you stand,
slender, silver and distorting on the graying wall.

I still can see the city's smoky glare,
recalling friends I've lost to time,
slender, silver and distorting on the graying wall.

Where's love gone and where the hell is Paul?
And Jill and the Nordines? Ill, or what, or well?
Slender, silver and distorting on the graying wall,
with Jill and the Nordines and Paul.