

## **I care too much**

and I cannot care less.  
I am always a billowing thing,  
have always plucked weeds  
aloud in the choking field,  
do not support selective breeding  
even for the sake of efficiency;  
indeed, am inefficiently  
suited to the toil  
of seeking and preserving  
the soil that is discarded.

What if those born to beset,  
to put upon or measure against,  
those determinants of  
traits we should aim to  
breed against  
are the fulcrums lodged  
between the jaws of sharks,  
the pivot point of  
a rusted teeter-totter  
set like ice in the verdant, bright-  
flowered playground?  
I will always mourn  
the dead.  
Why should I care less?

## **Some suicide**

You know the old overpass  
Over 95?  
Well, a kid died  
Someone mistook him for Thersites  
A step down and a fellow's wiped  
Inexorably  
All over some cars.  
A catastrophe  
A contemptuous metaphor

This kid could have been more  
Than a stain.  
Someone said that he smiled,  
Someone mistook him for harmony  
down where the grieving  
cattle lie  
Someone said this behavior  
was unanticipated

When he jumped  
Someone shouted  
Amen

### **Beautiful meat**

It's a beautiful meat  
a melting slide, a butter dream  
cream and slow and  
mellow  
friendly to the brittle tooth  
friendly to the bony palate  
beautiful meat

I have a friend  
That eats toast in town  
But she drives miles and miles  
seeking beautiful meat  
In the country, from a window  
She takes some and sells it  
at the city market downtown,  
Even in growling weather  
Even to strangers, if they have cash

My mom eats beautiful meat  
On a calendar plate  
Has one or more  
For every year  
Sometimes she spills it on her dress  
Sometimes she washes her dress  
She loves beautiful meat  
More than forks or teaspoons

There is a garden by a church,  
A cemetery by a church  
Stones and stones  
No one is home  
I will come back when I can.

### **Stellar's cow**

I wonder what Stellar thought  
glimpsing this ancient mermaid,  
visiting the canyon of ignorance  
and knowing it--  
The flick of tail, mirth,  
the gummy turnip trick.  
We lament its lack, and we  
murdered it--  
guts spilled for breakfast.  
Yum  
another dead and  
the hand trembled, that  
raped the dead. It  
looks like the quiver  
of woman, a bloody sheath  
all jumping large  
and forth

### **3 sisters**

It sinks within the milksoft, the screw--  
it curves to find the root, the  
long straw and stamen--  
and eats it.

It grows  
wildly from angles that cannot meet

rightly, only forage for gasps and  
or, hope.

See it swing west, eat the best of the tide,  
or east, where beasts bleed  
for the thirst of verdant field and fly,  
or nowhere, where dawn seeps unseen to  
curse the sinking eye.

Sinking it slinks inside  
the carpal maw of time  
and finds that water stills where it lies,  
that fever may kite a course  
to always, to ban the new  
gardens and rites.

They could have bent to grapes,  
drew them plump and itching  
to their tireless god, as thanks.  
They could have known each  
new moon, and named them each  
for their eldest children.  
They do fill the pail of chance and slough  
their dirty floors;  
it is well they knew the tenements, for they ate them.

Always, they sought choice, and choice  
lies:  
Left--  
the twist of turning aside is a summer coat,  
a boat  
launched on an avenue, a thin song.  
It is wrong, and the pit  
of the truth.  
So, right--  
here the night crowds the sea.  
Everybody is swimming,  
endlessly.  
They banter in crooked clothing, amidst  
the cantering  
chaos of their blood ties and oaths.  
Those heroes were not theirs.

They chose sides and lifted themselves,  
cast the rusted paddle  
into their small heart-fires, cut the cud  
and spun,  
or bloomed,  
or fell.

Even falling, there was air and space and self crusted under, held safe  
for years by  
white knighted cells.  
Real was a meal  
ate in small pieces, lest they fall ill  
and bloom empty.  
Always, the cage of  
chance licked their spines,  
always they had to  
choose again.

What god could sate the breaking tide?  
What gate would save these little  
pages from fate or flood or fire?

Three of them,  
and hungering in what was once  
a field of flowers,  
where Summer's insects  
knitted yards of holy eyes for  
their baskets.

Three, and staggering  
to reach the dawn of next.

Three, three, three,  
and freer than flowers  
but always picked upon like curious scabs.

Three arguments,  
pistillates,  
answers  
and questions,  
sleeping fitfully in the dust  
of morning, limping on,  
tripping upon

the dark of deeper meaning.  
Care was costly for these  
three, that wept in  
sun-stroked lessons, that wept  
in ancient gardens that grew photographs  
without memories, in

the shame of the staminode child,  
in temples that shucked the meat of moral,  
in the sleeping arms of each,  
in the tired street  
that bore houses that were home-pieces,  
in  
three days that ate and eat,  
and under  
the heavy hand of the haunted sexton  
that tossed  
three flowers to the sea.

Which road?  
It is asked as a faraway-eyed  
stranger might, seeking the succor  
of moontide.

Which road?  
A smile,  
milky in its wrath, slapped  
on these bellwether brats.

Which road?  
What sunrise gorge could arrest  
the set of this gut,  
this stuttering,  
beef-licked,  
splanchnic prize?  
Which road?

One gathers the baskets-of-gold  
and speaks.  
One worries in bloodroots, recoils,  
retreats.  
One eats, and eats, and dreams  
of the bugloss dawning, where there lies

an ending and an offering.

Which road  
can repurpose the rain  
for the three  
that sink "with all we love  
below the verge,"  
small ships foundering  
in the grey dawn breaking,  
in the sea fever  
that spurns the long trick of knowing,  
in the promised purging of those  
days that are no more--

those days that  
have sunk,  
yet arrive  
small and swollen,  
a chrysalid  
waking and sore?