

The Cove

“What do you want?”

Your eyes, wild.

Green and lush.

Your hands drop

in exasperation.

Decades of centuries,

pass before my eyes.

Moments upon moments of time.

Of misunderstandings and misspoken words,

Of all of history’s missings.

This must be the greatest.

In any random dying day,

with humidity still hanging

heavy in the air.

Sailing deeper

into a starless night.

The full moon allowing sight,

as if it were still,

the summer day.

And we jump recklessly into nothingness.

The water,

still warm

from the heat of the day.

As we are there,

in that warmth,

in that gentle glow

of moonlight.

As we are there
wondering what is below us.
Stretching our toes deep,
into cool pockets of water.

As we are there
with raging heat,
that quickly cools itself
in the night.

As we are there,
with nowhere else
I'd rather be.

But in this failing moment,
With no moonlight
to cast shadows on your
untamed eyes.
I am left with resign.
For what you will not see,
to me, is every bit knowing
the thing, I would like most
to deny.

Red Wing

The blackbird returned today.
I hadn't remembered to miss him.
His red stripe stark in contrast
against a heavy gray sky.
Perched at the top of my sapling,
he swayed.

Cocking his head,
for a better view,
of the oily seeds,
laid out for the squirrel.
I shift on one foot,
and startle him.
His wings flap briskly,
but never lift him.
His black eyes strike mine,
and I know he remembers...
The banks of the cool spring pond,
the indelible smell of damp earth,
and the warmth of the sun
in my hood.
Swaying in the reeds,
his red stripe stark
against the blue.
Watching me,
but never leaving.
Through endless March mornings
with nothing to miss,
the restless clouds move on.

Hope Is All

The smile on her lips is creased and drawn. I do not tell her.
I do not point out her lines. Or her loss of hair.
She laughs at the dancing blue elephants in the ceiling.
I pretend I am laughing too.

I pretend we are somewhere else.

.....

On the street I pay a man
who does not speak English,
for pizza that does not
smell American.

The air on the street
is thick and daunting,
but I welcome the struggle to breathe.
To pull air from the living.

I stop on the corner
and watch a homeless man.
His hair, dreaded. His coat, heavy.
And I pretend we are walking together

I pretend we are walking to somewhere else.

.....

The pizza does not taste good to her.
Nothing does.
It tastes like straw she says,
and slowly eats the canned peaches.

In a half-lit room
I watch her breath, sleeping.
Her swollen hands, loosely
holding the bed rail.

And I will remember those hands
in lucid dreams and
childhood bursts of memory.
Cutting onions and cleaning knees.

.....

Doctors stand in corners
and whisper in shadows.
I use tactical moves,
to get a word.

And they say hope is the best.

Even with a notebook
and a favored pen
and the word *transfusion*.
Hope is everything really.

.....

Deep in a sleepless night.
The apparition of myself,
a maze of endless halls.
The smell of despair and latex gloves.

And that constant, heavy hum,
that anywhere else would bring calm
and sleep.

If only sleep was the business.

Along a wall of quiet windows
I look out over the city.
The dimly lit streets pouring
with places peaceful as prayer.

And I have to remind myself,
with the force of grief-stained tides
that out there too, is only hope,
holding up the sky.

Dinner Party

The dress
feels perfect
and looks ordinary
a color
only you can recall.

We weave
winding streets
and arrive late
a three-story Victorian
with haunted peaks.

Murmuring voices
and Stella Gray
decorate the air
as we climb carved stairs
catching our breath.

We're led past
plates piled high
with bones and cold gravy
to a dimly lit room
filled by a table.

"Sit" the hostess says loudly
as suddenly silenced
eyes look up from
delicate pastries
and simmering port.

Making us
secretly long
for the chicken
on plates
stacked in the kitchen.

Staring across
a polished table
your fervent eyes
flickering the look
unfamiliar to us.

Later in milky sheets
I push you
to uncharted places.
You giggle with excitement.
Like a small child.