

*After beginning*

*mondays*

bought a \$1 star wars puzzle. the neighbors hid their halloween candy bars & put an armless, bloody nurse on the front step. plans were made then cancelled. an entire universe felt falling, making exist only a feeling of wearing underwear, of reading all day & never eating food. dreamt; grimaced. wore sweaty shoes, sat on a receipt. wanted more—then less. at the break, you left your food in the sun & prayed for it to stay warm. you let your computer die, for how great is the rebirth.

*coming home*

First there was  
the wretched sadness, at times wondering  
if there could be some sense any stronger. Not even that the crying was incessant,  
not enough that it never ended,  
not enough that that drive—oh, *that* drive...it was ever living in my psyche,  
preserved, it seemed, for all of my eternity.

Surely it faded, as I knew looking back it would have,  
as I hoped looking on it would. But by then,  
solidified,  
it would never leave me—if not the thoughts, the feelings, just the images.  
I'll take that, sure.

Then, the great adjustments: simple at first. Food, water.  
Warmer temperatures, less adjustments, ironically.  
People. A bed. Time—seemingly so much time. And silence.

Let's skip, because my heart...  
oh it wants to bleed out—not the heart but some demon in the distance,  
dictating its wicked plan in my body,  
reaching out violently for a grip on the blood trickling down my arms, then up as I type,  
wanting so desperately what any invisible thing wants,  
living outside of nature's grasp:  
everything that we have  
(our heart, our brain, our limbs—and just to twist and churn,  
not because they have any use  
to the invisible). But I tell you, there are two lookings back:  
fororn, and the brave & obedient heart. An attempting of the latter.

Yet immediately, there was work.  
Waking, so much waking, dressing up, packing and unpacking and cleaning what was packed.  
Understanding to frustration, frustration to more understanding—  
a different kind—  
and an acceptance that would turn into enjoyment, really.  
Then, of course, as we know what we know will come, reassessment.  
Searching, researching, attempting and being burdened. Or so we thought.  
Finding, rejoicing, thanking—praising. But work,  
it always comes to a closing,  
just as it was opened,  
and not by us but for us. Everything but the actual work seems to go quick.

And here again, the searching. The heartache (it seems),  
the finding, the premature over-rejoicing...  
when will it, my heart, have learned from the last time?

Yet, again,  
another slow acceptance. And when I looked on back,  
the time wasn't going like I thought—which is good!  
Because what I thought,  
what I'm thinking,  
was never what anyone wanted for this, for me. And thanking them,  
in my head,  
the cycle continued as it does for many:

a waking to others' waking,  
a waking at first of myself,  
a second and final waking. Fed up of being un-awake,  
but realizing my lack of tasks to do.  
Recalling the day & morning before & my list of  
activities, I slowly stir and start the tea. Draw the bath, bring in the books and a small bit of food.  
(Mother always regrets my lack of eating.) The books, they vary,  
but I think I've found just the combination:  
ancient theologian, modern-day biographer, critic (a bit controversial but ending encouragingly), text.  
And the text, rewarding,  
provoking,  
unlike the sap I've heard, though I wanted to like the sap.  
These all about the miracle of miracles,  
the questions of a historical Jesus,  
men who were great,  
why weakness is strength and two daily reminders  
to thank God when you ask Him.

It gets hot, so I wash off and consider where I'll go next. To the computer.  
& washing, I recall another like me who I so liked,  
how in the Spring it was his time to work—following  
a long stint of “it was really hard, I was not doing well” and I wondered  
how *he, he* who I so respected,  
who worked so much harder than *me*,  
who had the rawness,  
the talent,  
the preparedness...how this man could be lacking.  
Could be living at home, stuck.  
And I saw it then, as now.  
“Unafraid of ridicule and seemingly able to tune out,” little Karol;  
so it seemed, prayer:  
an asking,  
a finding what is lost and never  
what is—what will be,  
though not about the it. The who.

& a slow acceptance, as it must be—not because you wanted it, or  
because you came to know it so well it truly became yours, no.— but  
it was the way it has to be. an accepting of this:  
in these, the quiet moments,  
even when you, in your laziest time, regret the future looking, searching & wait,  
when you do not have nor seem to never have  
any bit of either what you want or what, seemingly, is wanted for you.  
a loneliness—and the kind you've never felt.

but you wait.

like little wojtyła, you, awaiting so much but waiting for nothing, by choice, were praying. on knees.  
wanting so desperately, not the future, but to truly see God's mighty face: so, you learned,  
unlike the human faces we unsuccessfully attribute with metaphor.

not that you had no hope—of course you did.  
but that you were doing nothing, and felt as if nothing would change.  
and yet, we read,  
“there will be no inner tensions between one desire and another” —  
the desire to read & bathe & drink like you had no schedule, yet a need to work,

the desire to have and have not,  
the desire to be alone, the one you had for the past four years, but you wanted company.  
the true fear of being lonely, and yet  
reading on to find out the rest: a glorious ending, an end to the past, a savior.  
the thought  
you had never given up on and, for once, were proud of yourself.

not that we would, of ourselves, think poorly: that we would  
think of ourselves less.

*black santa smiles on me from the snowglobe*

it seems wrong on a christmas morning—as traditions shift in time,  
you so skeptical of the new ones yet not quite unafraid to leave what was. like leaving childhood,  
because you wanted so badly to be grown.

so we all four go to shower, to put away the wash, to find a new christmas song to play. there are few  
presents under the tree, and it becomes apparent (how humble!) that if you were to put up a family picture  
this morning you would seem so unworldly in your lack of gifts: how kind to unbrag, how lovely to realize  
what's true of this morning. but in your unbragging you greatly brag about your being able to afford the  
nicest trinkets yet restrain. all because a bigger gift comes later, lest you forget.

even now, in my bragging of my honesty (of the truth of what I'm truly saying), I am filled with an  
arrogance,  
not unlike feeling, as the girl on the tv,  
that if I say I hate myself it somehow makes what was hatefully done coexist—  
not because it has become undone, but in its meekness  
all watching have let it slide, with a nod of the head.  
yet in my knowing I should copy this,  
I tremble:

how can we not run down the stairs at dawn, in this: the first year I haven't risen too early?  
how can we change locations of a celebration, or forego the reading of a favorite tale?  
why am I writing like this when santa has just left his gifts?  
why has he not left his gifts?

& all is new: tradition, the lack of tradition, how we feel about this day and how strong the mixed drinks  
as opposed to last year. even a desk is new, and the songs that play when I should write  
and the books that line my new desk.

the news still plays next door, some books never change, I now sit on the floor unafraid of the  
floor-germs, lying on the ground to read. so that writing is easy: read, lift up your head, type.  
everything is here, which is what makes anything so attractive—having it all.

the ball of my hand has sweat upon the metal of my computer.  
but this is too human an act for technology to understand: they are not water-proofed. because who thinks  
of that?

if he had not first sinned, would I be sweating?  
this is quite unlike any christmas i've had.

*to Federico Garcia Lorca (on the eve of the birthday of Mahmoud Darwish)*

narcissus,  
both you with your open books & balconies—  
the spanish you with handfuls of oranges,

the arab with a book of your other's poems,  
both dying under trees.

strangers to andalusian lands,  
neither of you strangers  
to the poem of pain, & to thinking

“how odd to be named federico.”

I carry the No, I carry your every No  
Beyond the persian sky—a cloud over my sorrow's self—

by Eden, slowly,  
regretfully,  
without peace.

& so, by your olive tree,  
I trace your steps to find my own. I find

a wooden crate, I find  
a world full of yesterdays.

*patterned little napkins & plates*

the little pastries  
the sweetest things  
always seemed better for the mornings  
and a hot drink  
even when not in that beautiful place  
where you stared at syria  
in black and white blotched ink  
in french even though you didn't understand  
or you understood when it said  
palestine  
that you thought you knew but of course  
were always afraid of not knowing  
and it's always  
doing when no knowing  
that doesn't quite get you into trouble  
and the little man stayed up all night mostly  
waiting for your bags  
by the tiny elevator  
or shoveling a worst-storm-in-years  
on his Saturday  
which always everybody  
should have off  
to wake up early even or write  
and finish early still before the kids wake  
with a small cold flaky white  
pastry with semi-melted  
semi-sweet chocolate  
and a hot drink  
so his wife will sternly say  
"eat before 3 today,  
and a hot meal at that!"