

The Phone Call

I pour myself into your ear
honey and salt and iron
an invocation
to heal
what ails you.
It takes nearly an hour.

You tell me:

*“I wish Selina was still alive.
She always knew what to say.”*

Black Plastic Trashbag

A stranger once accused me
--with a poisoned smile,
you know the one--
of describing trash bags
as black
“to mean something.”

Against my will
I perceived her mind
clipped like a dog's ear
weeping blood and clear fluid
through the teeth
of tight-pulled stitches.
How it flopped, impotent
a wingless bird
an eyeless mutant
a mudskipper
pulled from its squelch
to shrivel and die
in agony.

How horrible,
to see only hate
in the magnificent shades
of everyday things.

Memories of Orion's Belt

Proud hunter Orion spied
and i'm stolen
years and years
to childhood

flat on the drumhead skin
of a trampoline
bathed in blue-shine glow
sleeping bags and siblings
too excited to dream.

The sprinklers chased us inside too early.

Hard Release

I wrote a poem for you
pages and pages
love and conviction
and an apology
for digging my fingers into your arm
for clinging
like a child
when you wanted to be free.
Boiled from the bone,
the marrow is just this:

Fly free, Bird.
Bloom, Flower.
Pour, Rain
on the stinking, filthy masses.
I'm done trying to keep your succor for myself.
The kindest thing you can do for a firebrand
is let them burn.

ART

Entered my first story contest
and I'm possessed by the absurd desire
to take a sparkler,
rattling spare from last July
and light it in celebration
of practically nothing.

Arrested, I sit in silence
while the family next door hollers and splashes
sleek in their pool.

My life feels measly.

I split a house with roommates
our only similarity
how much we dislike each other.
Hidden in my sanctuary
I stack cups until it's crowded.
A paper plate stinks beside me
curling with orange grease.

If only I could cry, I might expunge it
but the emptiness is hooked too far down
buried like a parasite.
It chokes
like sputum
too deep to cough up.

I cling to
ART
Whose worth can only be subjective
ART
My piddling words are important, right?
Because technically they're ART, right?
They mean something, so I mean something
Right? Right?

Worse than this yawning feeling
soundtracked by the spasming elation next door
is the knowledge
if I had everything I'm jealous of
I'd probably still be unhappy.
I'd hate that my baby cried
complain about my husband's dirty socks.

Barefoot on the patio
A sparkler burns to ash.