

the facial

shuttered in a dim, amber lit interior
all my treasures wait howling in a bowl
a woman smelling of frankincense or
is it cedar
enters and announces in a voice like candlelight
that this is my time
unflickering I drift and expand
beneath her petal hands
she takes them
one by one
like two fish gooey fragrant
boneless
meeting in salty sea
it will be hard to leave
this aquarium of ease
my body is liquiding honeylike
new
traveling alone
in an almond
coconut scented underworld
of unfamiliar ease
this thick and steaming river
bears me deeper
aside and within
I'm

peaceful now accessible
to all
like the weather
like a mountain of gold

to My Ex

Disaster struck like a series of storms,
not just one zigzagging bolt in darkness,
but rather, a fire, a collapse, a dismal clash,
a slow and burning knowing.

Will friendship sprout like those green nubs you see
muscling up through sidewalk stone, fresh and new,
like tiny candles burning on a cake, shielded carefully
by a hand from wind, then blown out fast, except

that no one's singing. Pay off
the debt, return to sender,
turn off the light, read to page ten,
sink or swim, dance, go under,

and when the wave comes,
hold your nose. Hold your breath.
It's a manatee, not a shark.

This is a hand, not a star.

This is a friend.

The prince has drowned.

We will not miss him.

To K

Sitting

at a long table in a stone church

in front of a window

beyond which

a winter day dims to twilight,

she peers

around another person's head,

her curly hair a banner.

I'm new in town, she says, to everyone,

or anyone

listening.

She's

looking for a friend.

She's

new in town,

new in town.

I do not need

another friend,
and I leave briskly,
a moss-colored scarf
wound around my neck
like a serpent;
I exit
stage left
out
into the cold of this place
that I love.
Here and there,
I see her
around town.
In a store,
a salad bar café,
leaning against a wall,
again: another window,
with a group,
a few of whom I know,
not well,
getting into her car.
We wave sometimes,
recognizing
one another
vaguely.
But I am busy.
Too busy.

But over time, who knows
why this happens,
something
shifts, gives way
like banked sand
at a beach
when our feet
sank through
and we rode down
surfing the earth,
an elevator of dirt,
to where the waves
lapped at our feet
like a good dog.

Now we are at
a Christmas concert
singing an old song,
making fun of the violinist,
whose lips seem sewn,
and the man in the kilt,
playing the mandolin
while new snow dapples
the stained night windows.

Who knows
what life
has been wanting
to give you,

or where
it wants you standing.
Here's to what
we don't know,
manifesting around us,
in plain air.
Here's to mystery,
the unfinished,
the becoming,
the blessing
waiting around the bend,
the
unasked for
friend.

Everywhere

I have walked around in circles.
I have traversed squares.
I have aimed myself in all four directions.
I have looked everywhere for you.

Why was I given a heart that yearns?
Others find their heart's desires
and settle into lush green velvet sofas, soft as pastures.
Others leap and land; others plant, root and bloom.
Some aim a remote and press a red button, and
voila, the perfect show.

Not me.
I stray, and wander, gaze out to sea, squint

at the horizon, believe myself into travel, a sail
someday; I
envision things.

An astrologer
once told me that I was destined
to a life
in which lovers turn to friends.
She herself has the same planet, she said,
in the same slice
of the circle,
but something shifted then
floated
to earth for her
like a fallen star into
a backyard garden,
and love has billowed forth
for her
like green ink in water.
She showed me
her ring,
like captive sunlight,
untouchable, taunting,
a promise
of sorts.

I can see into the dream
I just dreamed.
I am at a picnic.
I am laughing
with some women
and their daughters.
There are trees.
You are there somewhere
and that song is playing.
Did I say
there were trees?

I am not lying when I say
I have looked

everywhere.

Short Poem to a Striped Belt

The red is for my blood.

The blue is for the sky at night—dark, wide.

The gold is for the pumpkin.

The green is for the grass.

The white for cloud.

The violet for Victoria Edwards who threw up on the swing.

The yellow is for light.

The end is for itself.