

## Big Time

The wait for recess. Eighteen. Twenty-one.  
& here we are, always counting quicker than the countdown,  
ensuring ample time to make a wish before we blow out the candles.  
Then it was on to a bigger school and a bigger school  
taught you to speak with a different tongue, to lift  
with your knees, to work twelve hours at a time.  
So even though the pack has never left your side  
since you pulled the cellophane ribbon free,  
you cannot trust it. Pull cigarettes out, one at a time,  
and roll them between your fingers & thumb until  
the tobacco danders down, piles like fluff on the table.  
Hold your lighter to the pile & waft at the smoke:  
a vestigial prayer beneath the last incandescent light bulb.

## To the Adventurous Couple Seeking a Third

My first instinct was to tell you I quit cutting my hair myself, so that your husband won't scratch his balls, meander into the bathroom and find me over the sink with orange-handled scissors, clogging the drain with my salts and peppers. But that's a lie.

My first instinct was to look at your breasts; the second was to tell you about how I no longer cut my hair— which isn't true either. You tell yourself you're going to stop, but it's never that easy. You say "In two weeks I'll go to the barber" but then you see strands of hair a bit longer than the rest. So where to even begin?

I've never done this before, but I have always considered myself to be less of a versatile top and more of a perpetual ending: even with the lights off, I still have to close my eyes.

Do we take turns showing each other our arms collections, then play *Guess Who's Under the Table*? A this-is-my-rifle-this-is-fun sorta thing? Do we draw our roles from a hat? Constance, Christ, or Uncle Jesse.

The fear of drowning should be enough for anyone to walk on water. Do you remember Danny Tanner? Scrubbing one bar of soap with another bar of soap?

They bound him, blindfolded him, put him backwards on a donkey, sent him into the desert. Though it dangles only a foot or so out of reach, the donkey was never meant to get the carrot.

## Tiny Acorns

I.

Listen, I'm first to admit: there are more empty seats than desirable  
in theaters since *Audience* became type-cast and as *Victim*.

Now, we're actors, all of us, & must strut & fret about a silvered screen:

To die? To be born again for all subsequent showings.

We will see each other again at the after party, right?

Because it's always been bigger than tubs of buttered popcorn,  
some spilled soda, a few rows of ruined seats.

Paparazzi, the camera flash, the outlines of brass stars in terrazzo  
have all been sleight of hand. The real story is getting you

to tell the story you needed to hear without us providing you the script.

You might struggle—we all do—with the forest for all the trees we've felled,  
but I assure you, it is there & just in case: we've these experts in and of the field  
to tell you what you need to know about these trees we've felled  
& just how exactly you're supposed to feel. So now let's turn you over to Bob.

## II.

I remember the halogen days when I was a young girl or boy (whatever it takes for you to better relate). My grandfather, my two siblings and I went out into the woods, walking the dogs—fall, Thanksgiving for all-inclusive purposes, in the rural Midwest.

I should mention Grampa raised hunting beagles. Never best in show, I was the middling child; however, Little Red was a field champion, so one year we blue-ribboned the junior rabbit hunt. You couldn't pet the dogs: *teach a dog to play and the rabbit gets away.*

The cold was not bone-chilling; one would say *finger-numbing*, perhaps. The kind of cold where one rubs one's hands together and blows into them like God may have when he first created fire. There wasn't any snow yet, nothing to cushion the falls, as my little brother stumbled over roots, branches, his two tangled feet. The constant falling wore on us, our nerves; so when my brother wanted to go home, Grampa turned and snarled, "Well, go on back then." The little boy, the intrepid blue puffy coat shrank benignly into the gray matter, but the mittens he would manage to lose on the way back home would stay together, forever bound by red yarn.

III.

That is nice, Bob. Now, these trees remind me  
of the beaches ... it was either Maui  
or Bora Bora. Have you ever been?  
You need to add it to your bucket list.  
It was either the second honeymoon of my first marriage  
or first honeymoon of my second marriage.  
The palm trees lined the white sand beaches  
like soldiers ordered to open fire on peaceful protesters.  
I'm not saying bodies were everywhere.  
I am saying there was one—one body!  
I can't even begin to describe this topless bronzed beauty of the tropics,  
a shimmering diamond sedated, without rough edge.  
Her flesh seemed born of only lustful sighs.  
Her breasts, no bikini top could dare hold.  
How everyone stared, even my husband.  
It made me feel small. No one should be made to feel  
like a second class citizen in their own body.  
But not anymore. I've got these puppies now.  
Hardly a scar. See a plastics man. Add that to your list.  
Now I'm ready. I will loose my breasts upon the world  
and they will do more than merely slouch towards Bethlehem.  
Oh, they will gallop, bear down, and devour.