

## **Sunflowers**

Look, the sunflowers  
are reaching,  
vying to outdo  
one another

in the quest for light.  
The tallest one,  
the first to unfurl,  
reigns over the others.

Golden petals scintillate  
as it softly hums  
an incantation:  
“Stretch, grow,

spiral up.  
Offer up your seeds.  
and become transformed  
into goldfinch song.”

## Japanese Beetles

Overdressed, they descend,  
gleaming copper carapaces,  
jeweled emerald heads—  
insatiable mandibles grind.

Through the raspberry bramble  
wings whirl in a soundless blur,  
coming to rest on the topmost leaves  
to execute the task of decimation

laying waste to all that is tender and green.  
No natural enemies, their greed  
goes unchecked, leaves behind  
brown skeletons for plants.

Predator, I have stepped into this role,  
plucking beetles, sweeping them off leaves,  
interrupting the release of aggregate pheromones t  
dropping them in a jar of soapy water.

The jar that once held vitamins, its discarded label read:  
For Energy! Immune support!  
I drop each beetle there, uttering a blessing  
for the leaves, my own pheromone—

“Heal the world, make it a better place.”

## **Cicada Serenade**

When Sirius is on the horizon,  
sparks of blue, glints of red,  
internal molecular clocks sync,  
calibration commences.

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Bathed in starlight,  
songs shower from the tops of pines,  
reverberate, surround.

Cathodic:electrons, protons, neutrons,  
begin to jiggle-dance.  
The old refrigerator recognizes the frequency,

hums along to the crepitation of popping wings,  
bombination of dissonant drones.  
The amplitude decays exponentially.

An aural madeleine,  
the vociferous buzz radiates,  
blends into the contours of summer.

Hums to rest in the heart  
where it resonates, a chant of creation,  
preservation, liberation.

## Piecework

This is the task  
I've set myself  
with a rainbow  
of fat quarters—those sections  
of fabric cut wide for quilters  
—and yards  
of muslin,  
steady hand, tiny stitches,  
needle, thimble, spool of thread.

From the infinite black  
abyss come explosions of color,  
I piece them into jewel-  
tone stars: peacock,  
tangerine, kiwi, fuchsia, dandelion, parakeet,  
fastened together.

Calloused fingers that once rocked the cradle  
rock the needle with a running stitch,  
reiterating geometric trails,  
quilting absolution in  
constellations.

A mantra set in stitches,  
a search for light that penetrates darkness,  
nothing to do but get your bearings straight.  
Stitch. Backstitch. Knots secured.  
Each push of needle and  
pull of thread  
an invocation  
to create order.

Disorder lurks in the lining  
of my son's thrift shop leather jacket,  
and the laces of his combat boots,  
a facade that fluctuates between racing thoughts  
and days where he can barely get out of bed,  
brush his teeth, cope with human interaction.

So, I labor on this quilt and  
imagine him a grown man—  
clean-shaven,  
tangled-thinking smoothed out,  
threads of wellness assembled  
into a patchworked life.

## Upcycled

Black sweater,  
thrift shop find,  
damp, listless,  
hanging outdoors  
on the clothesline.

Cast off,  
you have been revived  
by traces of sunshine  
absorbed into fibers  
and the hallelujah of breezes  
waving through your sleeves.

Were it not  
for your backdrop  
of darkness,  
I would have missed  
the glint of a spider's web,  
illuminating filaments,  
electric dots connecting  
across your night-sun sky.