

When It Was Time

faith
that the story is
what the words mean
is what the story is
is what the world means now

i only know
one way to write
just like you
only know
one way to hear

the words
that we say
that we are not saying
that we cannot say
that we cannot even know

are blind words
being sure
of what they hope for
and certain of what
they do not see

makes no sense
you say
like science makes
no sense until
you study it measure it appreciate it

not blind
like calculus
not being God
but God
being calculus

the words
of our heart overflow
from the meaning we impart to the world
like sense and nonsense
math flowering as we speak

Trust

A quail smacks into the side
of a house.

A hawk follows but flies into
a skylight above
the kitchen.

Both birds, dazed by the obstacle
of reality,
murmur quietly to themselves
while shuffling
about.

One on the ground nervously
looks around
for a few more minutes
then ambles
away.

The other, perched in a tree,
seems
content to ruffle itself
into
invisibility.

[] **City**

In her silence there are no words.
Just quiet sounds: baseboard heater,
refrigerator, people going up and down stairs,
shower, clock, distant vehicles.
Occasionally a cat or child.
But mostly, an unrelenting stillness.
When the boy stopped by this morning,
he avoided the woman's eyes.
She has been thinking about that all day.
The way he ran up the driveway,
confident as the winter snow.
His nineteen years wearing well on him,
the shorter hairstyle framing him,
the gift in his hand her forgotten token.
She accidentally came up the steps
at exactly the same time,
heading for the recycling bins and laundry.
She smiled. He did not. She greeted him.
He said he had to go. She said thank you.
He turned and ran with the same alacrity
away from her, as though their investment
all along had been for naught.
She watched him, storm leaving for good.
Made the sign of the cross in his direction.
Hoped that someday her arms might be filled
again with things that are human.

Natives

How much of earth do we own—
do we press forward into the texture of, the scent of
to know what's inside?
A hay bale squared.
Stacks of them. Pushing in to find the weak point
so we can go through to an opening
to the barn wall on the other side,
the window with no rail.
Just openness. Anyone.
The openness into the pig field, mud pond,
barbed wire fence going round.
If she sees you,
you know she'll charge and take you into the slough
shoes first, chewing, and you'll never see heaven again.

The Lentils of St. Mary of Egypt

what do i desire on this earth
more than light and sun
the comfort of cool dark
a bite of bread every few years

what is there to ask for
beyond a hand holding my own
a prayer lifting up my body
to walk across the river

those the Lord loves
he nourishes with himself
bringing us into
the feast of his heart

like portions sifting
through my fingers
my wanting falling
to the whispering ground