

I Hate Rainbows

It was morning all afternoon
and the rain was somehow involved
in who we were

when it disappears, a rainbow emerges
end to end, a bold one full of lessons

a girl in the backseat says,
I hate rainbows—
they remind me how nothing ever lasts

and looks in the mirror
making sure the colors she painted
on her face
are staying where they should
and saying the things she wants to say

The moon is cool, though, she admits
because it gives me evidence
that we actually spin

she translates from french
my own poem
that had been carried across the sea
from its native tongue
and it comes out better

It occurs to me now it was a poem
about how the butterflies and bees
are disappearing fast in the world she's inheriting—
how nothing ever lasts

And I want to be something that lasts for her,
so I say I'll help you write that poem about your uncle
not knowing too much about helping anyone
with poetry
but I never get the chance

I want to tell her that despite not knowing how to speak her language
she's taught me so much
but I don't

I want to say to her, yes, change is hard
harder than the falling rain
harder than rainbows are soft
but I don't

I want to say, feel what you feel, it's okay

even if you have to hate rainbows
but I don't

I want to tell her what a strange courage
they give me
a reminder that we only have this moment
but I don't

the moment passes
the rainbow fades away
and morning finally and too soon becomes night

My Name Is Belonging

They say the first step is admitting
you have an addiction

So here goes —my name is Mystery,
I've been here a million times
and Yes, I take heaping spoonfuls
of galaxies straight out of the jar
when I should be sleeping

I gulp in the seasons
whenever I see one one sitting out
on the table

My name is Abundance,
and I swallow fat Oceans
calorie-dense forests
and whole fields of lupine
when I think no one is looking

My name is Curiosity,
and I look under rocks
and climb through dark caves
running my hands against the wet walls

My name is Insatiable
and I chew on entire mountain ranges
just to get high

I have no idea what they say
about the second step,
I wasn't listening.

I was too busy sitting
on the edge of the cliff
watching the sun retire
and caressing the bark
of the madrone tree.

My name is Belonging.

She Saunters Ripe With the Season

She, like moon with no pace
but that of her slow wonder,
wanders to where the brambles bend and maples bow
in homage to their yield, gifts

ripe with the season, soft with promise

she puts down her titles
relinquishes her duties
into river time
and loves herself like water
soft and flowing

sauntering like an artist
a nymph at play

ripe with the season, soft with promise

stoops to smell the everlasting
sings herself with nettles
stops to feel the sun and mud
on her autumn skin

winding her way through the day
until with gentle feet and a clear heart
dusk arrives, and a crescent moon opens up

ripe with the season, soft with promise

The Experiment Isn't Over

What if we don't really know
if the universe is expanding
or contracting

or both

because we don't know
how willing or able we are
to stay open

We ask ourselves:
Can I withstand the crunch?

What if like a buried seed
the real question lurking is:

Can I bear the sound
of the shell cracking

with that sweet amber pain
mistaken for trouble?

But then, our ears pick up
the warbler's woo

suggesting dawn is here
yet again

and we breathe a little deeper

Suggesting these cycles
are built into everything

Suggesting the experiment
isn't over

Sirening

So you'd stopped hearing
the birds and earthworms
of you

and you'd misplaced the treasure
at the bottom of your breath

If only the sirening would stop for a moment

Whether in its bright red pouring
you imagine when that high pitch ambles
through the late winter air

or the sound of headlines
thundering through parts of you
you have yet to catch up with

or the signals bellowing "Stop!

Your life as you knew it is over.

Prepare for an extended rendezvous with your beautiful mistress loss."

If only.

Then you could uncatch your breath and wade in gently

counting the wild blessings chirping on the shoreline

and the color of joy
in your eyes
could stretch out
under a springlet sun.

Yet you already know
that to put your breath in a jar for safe-keeping

is no way to write a life.

And the only sirens
worth a near drown

are the lures of tender touches
from creatures
not meant to be shackled

So you raise your hands
to both sides of you
and pull. Pulling each ear

until all the old melodies
funnel their way in

and the water draws up
into your torso

until the wingsong
and sound of the sea
rings true in you

the critters in the soil of you
shake you free

and your inhale and exhale
match that of the earth's