

**A LUNA MOTH IS NOT A SWALLOWTAIL & OTHER POEMS**

## A LUNA MOTH IS NOT A SWALLOWTAIL

Sunning herself in the  
back porch light. A  
woman's wide-set eyes  
in green stare  
back.

Mouth parts vestigial—  
there are no kisses in the ditches  
or beside the bright  
forsythia.

I've learned that I am no good  
at logging all that I am  
grateful for.  
Instead, I note what has  
surprised me on any given day—  
this is a better marker for  
me to understand it all: what  
gave me pause?

The brown bats  
dip and rise overhead—  
dark slashes  
sweeping between  
the box elders.

They search for her each  
evening. See,  
see! Her stillness is an armour;  
A temple that demands  
attention, unflaggingly.

Soon, like an ember waning,  
when you need the fervour  
of a fire,  
she claims another breath of yours,  
and then another,  
even though you're breathless,  
lightheaded—

## RED DAHLIA

I.

Darkly involute florets. Deep red  
of a young person's  
blood.

Faultless head.

II.

I could grab rough  
hold of its pom-  
pom blossom.

Stand between it and the sun it seeks. Crush it in my hand, when I'm sure no passersby are  
behind me  
with their shopping bags  
& her tender  
gardener is asleep  
in the house, unaware.

A pulling down

What has been built,

Grown. A destroyer of

Worlds on a Tuesday

morning.

(The first frost will  
win anyway, so perhaps  
it barely matters.)

III.

I am stronger than it,

this flower. Red Dahlia

Beauty.

And this poem is a decree,  
a flag planted in the  
dirt:

The choice to walk away  
must count for something.

## MOLTING SCARLET TANAGER

Blood spattered  
Yellow bird  
On my October  
Maple. Avian

Lieutenant  
Come from  
The Crusades—  
Tail feathers  
Open like a hand.

Everything is  
Contrast  
I'm learning:  
Beauty is

Contrast. Red  
Against  
Yellow breast—

Bird King of  
Hearts. Blood

Splashed, battle  
Scarred,  
Bursting  
With old love.

I see we are all of  
Us moving  
Through the  
World like this.  
Some more  
Cloaked,  
Disavowing,  
Than others—

