

A Comparison

Poetry is the scent of a cherry blossom, thrust down my nostrils and
pressed against the back of my tongue, bringing saliva up to fill my mouth.
It is the crisp spring air winning the love of my lungs and the hate of my sinus.

It is the heat and moisture of bodies pressed together in the night,
and the cold pallor of flesh when pulse is gone.

Poetry is the tearstained letter limply held in the lap of the widow,
the writings of Marx tightly gripped by the youth
and the diploma clutched toward heaven by the scholar.

Poetry is the glistening white summit of the mountain
and the damp mildew of the neglected bathroom ceiling.
It is the muggy air pasting my shirt to my chest
and the metallic scent of my knuckles cracking and bleeding in carried by a desert breeze.

By comparison,

Life, at its best, is a pair of lips with the corners aimed upward,
or a pair of arms stretched out
At its worst, it is hands pressed to eyes holding clear fluids in.

However, life is usually only the metal basket
filled with sticks of starch being lowered into boiling oil,
or the sheet of clean paper clinging to its brother a bit too long;
the two together being wrenched free from the wheels and cast away unused.

Life is also the row of red lights
and the engines burning without wheels turning.
It is the two by three and a half inch glow at 4 am
and the cold stethoscope pressed to a chest.
Breath in, Breath out; in and out again,
and that is life.