

apparent qualm

a lever needed for the sudden boulder in our road,
must move it, my child's request is in the balance,
but it scrapes us too harshly as we try to pass.
I call it wrongly, tenderly, an erratic, emerged
from glaciers' progress millennia ago. This doesn't help
she says. And so I try with ash then iron crow bar,
but nothing works, winter ice another hindrance.
we don't have time, she nods at this, then asks
for my favorite word, *however*, without the right lever
of no use today. My levers used and failed, she sees
what I would I could not, this pries back my need to do,
allows her to assay needs. We look at it, huge there
in our way. We shrug, smile, and know, however,
when winter gristle eases, the sun will leaven day.

any goldfinch will do

*Les neiges d'autun, où se trouvent-elles?
Une bourrasque, vite oubliée.*

it greens too fast and I am not prepared,
yesterday I brushed by buds on bush and tree
and accepted all the brash narcissi--
have been so close-trammeled in winter's clasp,
ready to declare projects neatly done
that this unfolding draws my eye to sky's
elastic clouds and colors and in the rising air
distracts me as I see the world is changing,
and used to holding all close to me, am loath,
try to keep eye carefully clear, but am caught,
a side glance, this bold invasive hue
and small barbs of raucous color reach at me
as they come through the poignant showers,
persuade reluctance to recede

then sunlight feeds an old exhilaration,
my heavy clothes fall, I leave them as they are,
still keep boots, step through mud and laugh
no matter the earth's strong tugging to my feet,
start scanning the bluebird box, tree branches
and when I refill feeders nudge narrow thoughts aside
because any goldfinch will do it all
and I am back –green, gold, and showers—
the sharp sun burning through,
and put the shavings of all thoughts aside.

it rushes this green and I am fearful, this rising,
the broad promise of full spring then summer, too,
will again decline, however fully now embracing,
give way as I, too easily, to the narrow plot
the dying and the falling leaf I closely watch:
yet, and this word *yet*, a silken noose loose knotted,
yet: one does not in oneself have such a yearly rising,
green therefore comes at one with terrifying ease.

"The snows of yesteryear, where are they? A flurry, quickly forgotten"

Autumn Urge

I heave a real sledge
hammer and am dead
on when I swing
to split the log
hitting neatly

my wedge

when I forget it's overhead
yet have no doubts
then the arc over and onto
is surer, log riven, soon
read, after seasoning,
in flame, smoke and ash

memory, a fine film
over all, supporting hopes
that tug, heaves as I do
to hum a bit in in search
of words, bars of small notes
yields echo only
of the long ago swish
of desire toward wedge
some first spark
antecedent for pride

weal of fire heals
precludes winter
and the journey, the arc, and the wedge
are in blithe collusion

return

and as I turned
turning back
ready to turn
should I turn now/yet
I should have turned sooner
no turning now
no thought of turning
(going, running, moving)
ahead,
no glance over my shoulder
no quick glance left or right to see
sun behind me
if a shadow is catching
up

what would I, after many *coulds*,
risk, dare
and if I think this way
how large
the what now causing fear,
ambiguity, guilt,
and now forgiveness?
oh, that, too large a backpack is,
could I even run with it
and what would make me want to

if anyone was
if the mother was
or messenger from the/a mother
after me
following, pursuing
and when the idea slid partially in
to consciousness
to the fact I could
(and if I would) consider turnings—
what interposed fear, certainty of fear
anxiety and knowledge of pos
if guilt, then our each backpacks
are too heavy for the run, the race

and any, any goal we could ever agree
to use for a turning, each to each,
each from each in this forest, this weather—
this altogether turning
 becoming a spin in space
a turning into self, a history,
and beyond our present reach

if I were to walk downstairs and you were not there

if I were to and you were somewhere *else*, a strange word,
if I got to the bottom of the stairs and you were not there
and had not been and I looked as I am now looking
at the evening sky and saw a sky with many small grey clouds
and said so in the evening's light blue pallor,
I would have to correct myself because I see that each cloud,
some lined with a light gold, possibly,
is to my truest eye even in this evening of ifs
and the subjunctive, they are all, really, a pale lavender
that is what I see, even though, even though
I came down the stairs and you for the second evening,
the second day and night are not here, and will have
successfully resisted returning from the else, the other

this silence of the house, hard for me now when I move
toward the stairs as I must and start down, the not here
hanging in the cooling air moves me through the door
to the beginning of the night's sky, moves me beyond
all the nevertheless of longing and loss,
the latitudes of absence trawling me
gently toward the you are not here, so I must brush
back the usual lock of hair from my eyes,
and I do, and here is an acceptable evening
that downstairs, out the door, searching the sky for color,
slowing the evening's decline,

I enjoy and will not turn from