

## **Domestic resolutions**

It's Saturday in the new year: I rise  
at eight in domestic air to spread  
lemon curd on toast and brew mint  
tea in a clay pot; I carry a chaste tray  
to the late bed you occupy in our  
new resolve, egg and butter  
beneath your creamy underwear  
I'll wash at nine. All week long  
my list of resolutions grew: musk oil  
for a man's rub of leather in a woman's  
boots and beeswax for shine of oak  
in your secret room: rise, old friend,  
dance the winter sun: with a broom  
of love I'll sweep our closet clean.

### **Ice storm in Boston Public Gardens**

Trees have turned metal  
Emblems  
Of my own limbs  
Bearing a weight  
Of old love  
Now wood and ice

Still there's promise  
Of spring thaw  
Bark cracks  
Crystal breaks  
A sudden laugh  
Through leaf  
Branch trunk  
The whole root of you

## **Jasmine branch**

the gold lights of Manhattan rise  
and soon the jasmine branch plunges  
in sulfur water of the childhood well  
we crawled into for just five dollars  
on a dare and there first smelled  
the senseless odor of death now  
hushed and violent upon this city's  
summer air to every overgrown child  
migrated here from provincial town  
in doomed hope that memory's quick shame  
and long haunt will dim these million lights  
now shining on that jasmine branch I break  
once more and thrust into your drowning hand

### **How natural you are**

why are you wearing  
that tangle of honeysuckle  
around your neck

that torn blouse  
of rose bush thorns  
tight across your breasts

that brittle skirt  
of oak bark breaking  
against your thighs

everyone already knows  
how natural you are  
from the way you move

with baby sparrows  
nesting in your hair

## **Tangerine peels**

two women and a man  
sit in winter light  
eating chocolate and tangerines  
from a crystal bowl  
mint tea steams the turquoise pot  
a green canary sings Mozart  
among dying hibiscus

the man hears familiar talk  
of transsexual politics  
does gender hold the heart  
at bay in heterosexual love  
when bodies are the same  
which can dominate the other  
is coupling war or just a game  
and if a game whose metaphors  
furnish the players' rules  
how do they know to play  
a game whose rules get written  
even during the act of play

not sure what to say  
or which to love  
the man stands up  
to clear the plates away

the woman in white  
has eaten all her peels  
only the chocolate's  
silver wrappings remain  
on a single green leaf

the woman in black  
has torn her peels  
into tiny bits and stacked  
them in three heaps  
upon three green leaves

the man stacks three plates  
in the turquoise sink  
he wonders how  
each woman's hunger  
can include a man

he chews a shred of bitter  
peel to find the answer

*pappa pappa pappageni*  
the canary's song is clear  
above the women's laughter  
tart tangerine in a wounded ear