

*There are feathers in the urn*  
and wishes to be wished to  
and salamanders abound after the heavy rain makes a muddy mess of the yard,

but through the gnashing teeth of this city  
there is nothing to worry about.  
There are few places so alone so full of that—  
that dream that happened to be happening the moment it was dreamt.

The one of the earth ripping open  
lava blood rock flesh  
through space on the dull hook  
the sweet melody  
the dessert fork  
and nibbled nest, the bereaved mother's sticky yellow feet.  
Make another house in another lamppost,  
struck matches follow dutifully,  
firecrackers merciful memory holsters  
petit pleases and smallish woes  
run with the dirty water down the cobble stone.  
Would you recognize your way home,  
if you came upon it?  
Already with each itch the crushed seeds.  
Two hours and twenty minutes.

*smoke trickles above bare feet*

grass overhead oceans gently  
lush green marking the warm wind  
slow soft rhythm  
simple flexible blue plastic  
rust crusted links back and forth  
careless taught wet wood  
tenses under out weight  
she inhales the country dusk  
and breathes out new words:

my parents bought me this swing set  
on my third birthday  
mom pushed playful  
“go away and don’t come back!”  
me giggling and windfilled  
slid gasping to her arms “I told you  
go away and don’t come back!”  
again and again  
of course I would return ecstatic  
to faked shock and exasperation

when I was maybe thirteen  
this swing set long abandoned by me  
I woke one winter morning  
took my sleep saturated body down the stairs  
mixed some hot cocoa  
marshmallows bobbing in my whirlpool mug  
I pulled back the blinds  
and between these two swing  
a deer’s gutted carcass  
hanging hind hooves  
tongue worming out of parted teeth  
the snow under gone red

*came into a good bit of knowing,*  
and I wanted to take it, like butter to a dinner roll  
and she forgot.  
And it was all the fatty parts of my steak  
gummy and hardening on the dirty edges of your plate.  
Some busboy scraped mangled pieces of cow  
into the trash  
and we left.

Now I am living my candle light  
thinking back to a shithole I used to live in.  
A light bulb went out, and someone took the fixture off  
but we had no light bulbs,  
I stop her mid-story  
“Jack Sprat.”

I wish I remembered my dreams better.  
I know I saw this typewriter come apart,  
I think most of my dreams are a comin’ apart.  
Something else, someone else  
I woke so sudden.  
I once met a girl who was pretty  
out of it  
she said  
she’d been up all night  
with bad dreams.  
And what was the point  
if she couldn’t even remember them.

*a wet smudge on the paper*  
the car won't start  
the horses are cranky  
the blades on the sled rusted  
ages ago, this uncomfortable  
rocking chair, the wet dirty  
air, the mud on all the side  
streets, the tick tick tock

Swanstalking, we place ourselves  
in another period of lengthy discomfort  
of surly remarks  
tight lips, cold soup.  
Hours with long faces  
beg for change  
outside the fishbowl.

Rake the leaves, fat wiggly earthworms,  
the neighbor's cat stuck  
somewhere in the laurel.  
I start fantasizing about a vacation  
meow, meow, we took years ago,  
any tropical meow beach.

What cruel and staggering inertia!  
We've been left here!  
Don't drink the ocean water,  
it'll get ya bloated then kill ya.  
Rake the leaves, "I was standing  
in front of our house, the car wouldn't start  
a pin sized hole opened up in my heart  
as I watched your silhouette.  
You were blow drying your hair.

I'm held together by chewing gum  
and bent paperclips, and large quantities  
of anxious dread, you rise and fall with  
the curtain, softly singing to yourself.

*I haven't got the heart to tell her,*  
I've never a stomach for bad news.

She laughs, my world is almost alright.  
I think of the unfairness of carrying

of who holds what, and how bad, which organs  
and we go, through the cornfields

in an old Buick, your grandfather babied  
but you can hear the motor laboring now.

The night won't last forever, we know this  
and yet we carry on, almost unwilling

taking back the choices that took us here  
and we are parcels, we are messages.

You can read our restless faces  
our wind tossed hair, run, run till we fall.