

Finding the God Particle

When we are finally standing face to face
and flesh to flesh, remind me that I want
more than your body, more than your mind.

Remind me that I want the infinite sweep of you
the full onrushing charge of you
the $m-c$ -squared of you, the big bang of you.

Remind me to give you the indivisible parts of me
the strange quarks of me, the charm of me
the up and down of me.

And though 95% of everything else is darkness
let us be nothing but a tangle of vibrating strings
caught in the claws of a curious cat.

The First Rule of Poetry

You have been given a gift
a curse, a knife under the ribs.
You have been given a word
a vision, the toll of a distant bell.
You have been given the overheard conversation
the fox sleeping atop a bale of hay
the suicide in the alley.
You have been given the dew drops
pendulant on the tip of every burning blade of grass.
You have been given the rape
the incinerated village
the little girl in pink shoes skipping as she sings.
You have been given the hummingbird flying against the glass
the shadow of a leaf on the wood of the boardwalk
the hungry raven's cry.
You have been struck with the cold cudgel of grace.
Now get out of the way.

To a Friend in the Near Distance

Between us the reach of stars
the hair's breadth, the gaps
in the net where silvered shapes flow.

What is locked in the cave
is still locked, my foot
on the threshold even now.

Between us miles of beasts
cataracts, deserts, forests of wind
the skin of the egg inside the shell.

I hold it all in the palm of my hand.
The bright coin of your being
that I rub till it gleams.

I strike the hammer blow.
Are you listening?
How it rings! How it rings!

Alone

I fell asleep by the river again.
Thirty-eight degrees. *The Stranger*
in my lap. How is it that the same sun
that gives this sweet lethargy
brings another man to murder?
A single shot, a pause, then four more.
As I watch the ducks drop into the eddies
I know the sun is not to blame, nor the moon,
the fires, the droughts, or the surging tides.
We act. We do what we want.
Sometimes we get away with it.
Sometimes we pay a price.

A Day in the Life

It's her birthday.

She opens a tiny black box
bound in a blue bow.

A billion billion stars tumble out
some yellow, some red

some big, some small.
They fall, in all directions

into a bottomless black bowl
where they burn burn burn

until she makes a wish
and with her cold breath

blows them out.