

We All Fall Down

Northern flickers, mourning doves, red-eyed vireos
stopped singing the day we couldn't breathe.
Did ash trees still rustle and swoosh?
We don't remember. Some babies were born
mute, never crying even for milk. Mothers
held them to their ears, listening for a faint gurgle.
Then dry thunder shook the ground,
we felt it but couldn't hear
small mammals wailing, wind gushing
like a fast river down the valley,
swallowing every note. After it stopped,
the world was silent. We couldn't recall a sound.

My Necklaces Have All Oxidized

Silver tarnished to dull grey,
as if this old body doesn't deserve
to be adorned, to call attention to itself.

How slowly we sag toward earth.
With such stealth.

I once wore earrings,
bracelets that jangled when I danced
like a goddess, believing I was
immortal.

Now I will give away
my jewelry, even the wedding ring
I haven't worn in years. I'll offer
myself, stripped down, to the gods.

Let them dance me into

silver

air.

Water Wedding at the Croton Dam

A pink ball spills over the falls
like a peony from the bride's bouquet.
Water is her shredded lace, stone domes
her church beneath firmamental sky.
She waits for a signal above gush and rush,
pushing away the roar as if she could stop it.
She sees bare roots dangling down rock,
piles of dead thorns. The dam will break,
lace and flowers flooding her future.
Her groom will call from above ground,
but she won't hear. She'll wonder if
she's forsaken in the freshet.

Ornithophobia

He named me Robin after his brother
but what if really he craved a bird
to keep close in a nest of rope,
roses, painted wood? He'd bring me
little morsels of attention, only wanted
to teach, not listen to my newly hatched
twirps. Once I could fly, I tried to find
my nomadic flock, but afraid
of winged creatures, I never did.
I folded my feathers back into skin.

I needed to make a clutch,
to settle into a cup of moss, leaves, hair.
I fed my own fledglings and even others:
song thrush, blackbird, willow warbler.

Ode to Vibrators

Thousands of naked women, heavy breasted,
unbreasted, wrinkled, taut-skinned, ankle-
thickened, sparse-haired or furry,
lie head to toe, a multi-colored chain
stretched across fields, backyards,
parks and parking lots. Each one holds
her soft purple sculpture aloft, like a Statue
of Liberty that stands for sex & freedom:
Give us your longing, your fear, your lack.

Now they are in a country of pleasure,
moaning and shouting and coming
in one vast climax, a chorus strong enough
to lift them until they're beyond men, children,
chores or chatter, a sisterhood of soaring thighs.