

## GESTATION

Some days it's okay to just take off.

You don't always have to be a machine,  
chopping along in heat and smoke,  
cranking out some incremental GDP.

The state will function just fine without you.

Sometimes the combines fall silent  
and the grass grows uncounted  
among the idle blades.

Walk the hills,  
lie down in the belly of the sun—and seeking  
no useful information,

attend to the crickets' world.

And when, over the lake,  
the moon rises yellow and full,  
plump as a late-summer fruit,

laying its long, trembling blessing  
in the water,

feel the fullness  
of the song within you

waiting to be born.

## FIREFLIES

They were marvelous,  
miraculous –

floating lanterns  
in the twilight –

glowing,  
hovering,

pulsing on the dusk like  
signal lights;

So we chased them laughing,  
hooting,  
over streets and  
summer grass,

and with the utmost blessings,  
swatted them  
with wiffle bats—

a whistle and a click,  
a delicate clack—  
spinning fireworks over  
sidewalks

and sewer caps;

and on the lethal bats  
at impact's smash,

streaks of liquid gold,  
luminescent ash.

Not much scruple there:  
we were boys.

And so too, in a couple years,  
when we'd outgrown  
killing flies,

we wandered wide in  
kindred fields

and slashed down other gifts of light.

And isn't that just  
the way of it?

To love and kill in a single  
swipe, as if too much love  
in a single

life would explode us all in a burst  
of light – so we must swat

them dark, those sparks of life,

and drop down panting,  
paralyzed  
into that ionized  
gripping darkness.

And still tonight,  
see them throb  
across the dim  
September dusk,

between the trees,  
above the shrubs,

bobbing in those smoky tides—

canoes with candles  
waiting there—

sending out, ever again,  
their impeccably coded

invitations.

## VOCATION

Yours will be a particular  
loneliness, a wandering long on laurel  
paths, because herein lies your woods  
to walk, your swamps to broach and skirt.  
There's no map, no compass, no GPS—  
this route won't show up on Google Earth;  
and though few would give a penny for it, even less—  
more likely a scoff and a curse—  
you'll be the one whose feet will sing—you,  
and perhaps only you,  
will know its worth.

## FISHING

Up early, first light, coffee muttering on the flame,  
Preparing the bait, the worms, the yellow-feathered flies,  
And the practiced wrist to lay a line across the sky  
To snare in this stream those mysteries without a name.

Wade in quietly—no splashing, no chatter, no hum;  
Read carefully the shadows and caverns beneath the trees,  
The smooth stretches of current, the shallows and deeps;  
And with easy breath, let your thoughts with the river run:  
It is only in silence that the big fish come.

WHIRLWIND / ICARIAN

Gusty twilight,  
the avenue,  
a spinning vortex  
of late winter trash  
funneling  
          and tunneling  
the light-draining  
sky;

bright cirrus streaks—  
frescoes,  
          fixed—  
high salmon leap  
the wide  
cerulean;

and in the giddy,  
gaspig, upwhirling  
          swirl—a coming-together  
spiraling world—liquor  
sleeves and scraps  
of bags, scratch-off  
dreams and headline  
rags—  
in hobbled  
orbits, rim-rolling  
blue, it's  
          been our pleasure  
serving you.

Across and around  
the gutter and street,  
an urgent,  
surging,  
sweeping dance,  
lifting and flipping  
idled wings—

a resurrection  
of broken things—  
a brief inspired  
whirling gyre,

a sudden flight to hero's  
heights,  
the helio-halo of  
halogen lights—  
but then, like that,  
a rupture, a

crack—  
the spell snaps—  
a broken

back, no Sistine  
finger to leap the gap;  
and then, unraveled,  
nothing  
nada

down spins the Icarus  
shower,  
bewildered, chastened,  
hollowed out,  
returning ashen to what  
thou art.

And so up and down  
the avenue, the cyclones spin,  
a pulsing,  
sky-augering dervish  
dance,  
dozens of undulating  
up-drilling  
swirls,  
multiplied convexly  
in the corneas of cars,  
and in the refulgent shine of  
bistro bars—and inside,  
becubed,  
reduced,  
glittering in ice and  
prosecco flutes,  
and echoed again  
in mirroring walls,  
in mimicking silver and myriad  
heads,  
widescreens dishing  
whisking shreds—

fire, vice,  
explosion, death,  
idols molten, messiah tech;  
doublet-flame  
cocktail eyes,  
Eyes aglitter, eyes ashine,  
Scoping, yearning lips  
and loins

Gleaming dreaming burning  
joints  
flocking up the vibrant din  
a magpie's nest of shiny things,

green-eyed gulls  
and guano spires,  
shrieks and shrieks  
and jeweled jaws,  
stunning flapping  
plumed  
macaws  
words,  
words,  
bills,  
birds,  
words,  
words,  
wings  
blurs—

dizzying  
dazzling,  
seeking,  
scattering,  
urgent,  
so urgent,

so  
urgent.