

fireflies

All this cool green fire!

Call it luciferase:

as if the blazes of hell

were compressed into one

significant brilliance

silently stirred in the crucible

of an insect's abdomen.

Pure flame, dedicated

not to damnation

but to love.

a damselfly at Wappoquia Brook

We see nothing of the nymph
in her aquatic life
all gill-breaths and waterlilies.

Season follows season as
she sheds her skins,
flicking tissue to
ride the winds as
she seeks the perfect garment
in which to welcome lovers.

Then glittering teal violet bronze
the jewelwing rises on a warm breeze
and goes hunting.

on the day

On the day my father died
I rose before dawn to feed the calves
as he would have done.

I finished my science homework before breakfast
as he would have expected.

Then I tore to shreds everything I'd drawn
the crisp careful diagrams of cells and skeletons
obliterating all evidence of frailty and failure.

With the strips and tatters
I started a fire in the woodstove.
Made coffee for my mother
as he would have done.

otherwise, how?

I had no plans to be
here on this plane, on this planet.
But the world had its elbow in
my ribs from the start.

Shouting *attend!*
You are needed.

Bring what you can.
If not polished marble and
fine silks, then duct tape and rags
because bridges always need mending
and tears always need drying.

Do what you can.
Set a beehive in sunlight,
a fire in darkness.
Write one honest letter,
one true poem.
Return one stranded starfish, then
another another another
to the sea.

Of course. Otherwise how
could I possibly imagine living in
the privilege, in the beauty
of this world?

dinnertime

Summer, solstice, evening.
The coyote waits, edging
the forest with dusky sleeves
of sinew and sharp bone.

A white hen, nurtured on grass
and fat green grasshoppers
ruffles her feathers and mutters
as she turns her nested eggs.

If we turn a moment—if we go
yawning, blinking, slipping from the vigil—
the hen may tend instead
the coyote's pups, feeding them
on blood and tenders.

Even still, knowing her likely doom
we named the hen Evangelina.
Because still the world exhales
cruelty beauty sustenance death
in the same breath.

river, horse, morning

Given this morning—
the riverbank overhung with bracken fern;
secrets encrypted in boulders and dark pines;
a lambent brilliance glinting
through fog parted by shadow;
an owl returning to her hemlock tree—
given all this, all *these*—
what else could I have done
but slide quietly onto
the broad back of a mist-gray horse
and asked him to carry me—softly, softly—
out of the fog into sunlight?