

The Wet

For days now we have had
The sound of water plopping on the roof
and deep puddles on the grass.

We've had thunder,

And lightning

Trees bent down dripping water.

Nothing is dry.

Our sodden shoes stand by the door

Our damp clothes hang in the bathroom

The rugs are wet

And there are buckets everywhere

Catching the drips.

With all this rain, my husband insists it is time to start building

He will gather up some animals

Wet dogs, wet monkeys, rhinos dripping water on the floor

He says God told him to do it, and every day

He goes out to work in the rain,

I can hear him swearing out there.

When he comes back into the house, he drips on the floor

And of course there are the animals, now penned up and smelly,

I could help him, he tells me, by feeding them, and mucking out the stables.

But I reply that this strange boat

Is his idea.
And he should hire some local lad
Someone good with animals,
Someone who doesn't mind mud.
Meanwhile, nothing is dry
No end to thunder and lightning
Just rain,
Endless rain.
I tell him I've had enough.
I'm taking the train
To Florida
Where the sun always shines.

A Petition Regarding a Dog Recently Deceased

Accept O, Lord
This, the soul
of our little dog.

We called him lots of things
Binkus, Binks, Bubster, Baby
Mr. B.
You will know him when
you see him

He is small, with dark brown eyes
and ears that perk up when you speak.

Don't let him boss you around
He will certainly try.

Dear God, you who keeps the life
of the squirrel and the earthworm,
the elephant and the bee in your hand,
Keep watch over our dog.

Let him chase squirrels
in the woods
and throw him his favorite ball, the one
with the missing squeaker

You don't have to let him sleep on your bed,
Although we did
Just let him have a soft spot near you
and treat him gently
for he was greatly loved.

The Line-Dance Lesson

We are all beginners here

Standing patiently, waiting for the music to begin.

We have practiced twinkles,

grape vines, slides and hitches.

Have tripped over our feet on the box step,

Bumped into each other on the quarter turns.

All of us are grey-haired, female, most

from somewhere other than Texas.

The waltz begins, floating in the air around us

and two lines move forward, touch hands,

move back. We move again and twirl

to music that talks of love.

In the middle of the dance I see her,

her face wrapped in pure delight.

Maybe she's a widow, whose husband

once danced

or maybe she has a man who would

rather fish, than shuffle across the floor.

Maybe she imagines a middle-aged cowpoke
with a deep tan and a white Stetson,
a silver buckle at his waist
One who will call her "Ma'am" and sweep
her across the floor.

Or maybe, like me, she feels those soft country
love songs bump up against her loneliness,
and moving across the floor to the rhythm
of the dance
is enough.

To a Bee Caught on a Frozen Birdbath

It must have landed early
Before full light
When the birdbath was a mirrored bowl, half in shadow.
Before it could see that what covered the top was
Ice, not liquid
With a drowned fly, entombed below as warning.

Now it is stuck fast and waits.
What does it feel, waiting there?
Does it feel in that moment, death's cool body
rushing past?

As when the car stops, the gas tank empty
And we're far from home, at night, and all alone.
Or seeing on television, the plane we could
Have taken, now a wreckage on the ground.
Or coming on a recent accident and wondering
If arriving a moment sooner would have put us into that path.

It is life's randomness that harms us or keeps us
Out of harm.

But now the bee waits,
Not like a creature in a spider web,
trying to vibrate its way out of trouble.
Perhaps it prays, or meditates, repeats a mantra
Hums all the Frank Sinatra songs it can remember.
Tries not to think of all the things waiting to be done.
It waits patiently for that great benevolent god,
The sun.
To free it.

With apologies to William Carlos Williams

This is just to say
I have eaten the
Plums that were
In the icebox
I also cleaned out a box of Oreo Cookies,

Ate the bag of Doritos, and
the rest of the Chocolate
Cake from last night's supper. I
Finished the Vanilla ice cream,
Drank two cans of Coke stored in the cupboard,
Ate the whole can of peanuts.
I fried up the steak that was in the freezer,
Along with the the eggs. I hope you
Weren't saving them for a meal.
Forgive me. Everything was delicious.
Tomorrow I will diet.

