

because I teach them to sew and everything

Stiff white linen offset our forest honey-coated teeth.
You there, again, between beats of the heart, thrusting.

Against the ironwork palms of hands wetted.
Open doors and starch. Skirt stretched over hips, yearning.

Retracing out of the question with his tongue down
her throat and a nun looking adrift blowing by.

Whoever's reading through the pane's reading
too loudly groping her forgotten rhythms.

Black-clothed villagers travel back roads,
mistaking known with unknown, stars for creation.

Surprised how shining birds led their sandaled feet
to the sea's jagged edge, bound by wire.

She heard the dry vibration underneath. Dust
veiled, she falters amid their makeshift murmurs.

When she puts ear to water, back to the sky, she hears
they love me because I teach them to sew and everything.

bulb

I cleave the orange
dig my nail into its tiny craters
which sink
under the force of my thumb
sections split its
spray shoots
into the mucous of my olfactory
epithelium into the finely sliced
paper cut enough
to trigger me
and my amygdala
back to Florida –
the shop of shells, the finagling
to walk away with a flat
mollusk wrapped
in plastic
protecting a miniscule
bottle of orange
blossom good enough
to eat I'd keep so long
on my vanity
the bloom would wilt
unlike the one you

sent me from an island
crushed
by someone at the mailboxes
scenting the entranceway
sunburst
for the whole cold
month of January.

The Box in her Hands

after Nadya

In the terrace garden sit five eggs on a small, round table.

Ovoid instability. Fragile-shelled.

More crystal vases replete with flowers she can't identify.

Clementine-colored airy petals round

Blood stains. Daisies grown wild with size white velvet

Arms reaching, speckled black star

Centers. The Prussian blue bouquet cleaved. We see her

Gaze into the clamorous floral excess.

Her billowing sleeves the narrowed neck the faded color

Of all the stems. The orange body small

Eyes oily dense blues. Stern thin mouth. Askance

The look. Or eyes shuddered in a breath

Of sigh, her back to someone? A task she does not want.

The box in her hands, held as if to tempt,

The perfect size to house five unstable eggs. Fertility hers

For the possible taking. The door. She is

At a window. Hair shorn. Circling round her head a halo.

I may as well write it down

: the scene where he dares to be
and she dares to take

his hand lying side by side
on a hotel-borrowed shower towel

still damp from sea-wash.
Her hip leaned towards him

curved descent
of her breast, something he can feel

as she draws their clutched hands
to the slight dip

in her sternum. Solar. Plexus.
Now he can come, bring his mouth

in - wisps of breath - lips to lips.
A beachfront sound capsule where

waves lap, salt penetrates.
I like trains, he says, where

clacking tracks and roused tongues
seek respite

thigh pressed to thigh vellum
temple placed on a shoulder.

The jostle back. Faces red
with sun.

Some of us make our own light

put a positive spin on tragedy.

Penelope enjoyed her freedom.

Ulysses was in no rush to get home.

Telemachus? Learning responsibility.

It's like when you're sick and a friend asks how you're feeling today and you repeat, as you consider demyelination, "no worse, thanks".

When a plane disappears from the sky without a trace and believers say, at peace, *destiny*, while elsewhere someone sobs fists on a tile floor.

Like when you had natural light inside and the gods - with the special occasion candle snuff we'd fight over - snuffed it out. And we shielded our eyes.