

## Easy Practice

1.

sipping Riesling and sweating on maroon leather  
as the moon rises in the Eastern sky  
clean smooth wood, fingertips  
floors and wall shine  
lightly traveled as people prefer mountain trails  
grainy elegance of wings  
a slight film of dust whirls  
the moon retracts ghostly sunlight  
the door clanks shut flickering gas lamp  
wind and a child's voice  
my breath, wine

2.

a crow yells from the rooftop flapping strong stretch of wings  
we should look at our three dogs in the yard  
as orange light bounces off an airplane and sunset clouds  
the dripping water through rocks and bamboo chimes hanging from trees  
the dogs sleep the move around and restlessly as the hummingbird hovers  
over planets the slope of wings and July wind drifts  
nothing exactly what we would like but what of it?  
there's nothing to tell: the airplane surges west  
the crow flying away at dusk

3.

someday all of it leaves  
tulips and sunflowers  
a large dinner fish  
that plate of tangerines and creamy Italian cookies  
photos of turquoise umbrellas  
farmers churning curds of cheese  
a wall of brick and ivy  
the sweat of people some earthy and sweet some awfully stinky  
like mildew and mold  
humanity swearing  
blindness the wearing  
weathering that funny way we age  
so full of mystery waiting for the guests and trees  
full of warbling afternoon birds  
so all of it ends  
we never know what will happen next  
laundry and paying the bills for certain  
all of our worries  
all gone

## Nikki's Park City

on TV she saw soldiers carting trucks full of groceries  
and weapons tremendous creaking impending dust  
she imagined her house on fire trying to get rid of  
her housemate who took crotch shots on her kids' cell phone  
living in the high desert woods her construction worker boyfriend  
at home in New York offered her a world ripped open and honest  
between us all just barely dinner time

a torment of listening and questions into that a torrent of frosty  
light she tells us *I don't wish anymore I let kids' fish die*  
in the bowl their orange scales  
like furry sweaters  
we rock bumpy upon the road cold air breathing  
and far away over the ocean in the hot land of soldiers  
and gunflare and explosion  
sharks cluster around coral flowers  
we're looking deeply into falling snow

### **at Feather River**

after he saw that strange light  
he told them in the hospital  
his car flipped off the road  
and he got out he dragged himself up the ravine  
his insides bleeding  
and he hitched a ride to the emergency room  
to try for life

you tell me this while we' re not really safe anymore  
by these cliffs and rivers,  
how we know when it' s okay to reveal how good it is to have friends,  
how you loved to travel with him,  
and although now you have someone else  
when had you never thought you would meet another  
and in the shimmer of summer by this ravine of light  
miles from our homes I wonder how it is to survive  
the disaster of death' s heartbreak  
and how you needed to travel alone, for a while returned to a tropical place  
you had visited together, then managed to shift back into the States...

they say there is meaning for us in everything,  
and I wonder what Ive done to deserve knowing all this,  
while you were telling me about loosing the love of your life  
I was holding a smooth stick, shaped like a dragon or a snake  
shaped by whatever made the courage to go on

## Vengeance

the street at sunset cool but that house inside smells like burning paper  
as there's a slice of it carefully pressed  
into my notebook I want this non-conformity  
this individualism as much as person inside  
how neighbors let this place go overgrown  
damp fronds and green and brown advancing through walls  
windows and floors

they call people *hoarders* the materiality of troubles and sorrow  
so I am border line I know collecting things  
imagining a desolate future I might need to replace the loss the sadness  
all that is crumbled all that might be this tumult and tumble

where cracks of sunlight edge through dust and the floors might have  
grass and faded colors and there's a look on the inhabitant's blurred face  
whoever he or she is must show the letter that permits  
occupancy no matter the stresses of the classroom  
yellow school busses pull into the park across the street  
children and adults across the street wonder they quickly look outside of this home make comments  
about it being abandoned crazy or scary and turn away make for the ballfield and swings

this approaching summer some choose vacations through breezy clarity historical  
landmarks lighthouses villages  
just another day where the wind will lead

I consider further how much suffering I need to heal

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someone visited family and sat out on the porch  
the children played in the sunny yard  
while in the house heavy draped curtains  
and dimly lit rooms bags of clothing boxes of books  
a writing table with manuscripts unfinished an alarming pile of work

the fresh wind and crows trees haven't spread out over the roof yet  
branches haven't fallen and spread around aimlessly  
neighbors who just moved in listen to the church bells  
and get ready they have nothing to loose and the people who live  
in this house could loose everything they know we do not know the reason  
across the street others gather for their  
Sunday picnic and soccer games  
the park has scrubby small trees everything is new

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at some point the authorities or the neighbors will have enough  
yes there are no barking dogs and we cannot see any refuse  
trash has been discarded so that no one knows what needs to be  
carted off as if all the junk might just remain inside  
meaningless to anyone who cares  
but the inhabitant who has aged of course like all of us  
doesn't know these new families who surround with concern  
or rules and regulations where is that letter which allows me to stay  
this person might wonder

the sound of whirring a leaf blower getting closer

what about the burning paper?

## nighthawks

four people in the window corner diner

woman examines a piece of paper in her hand  
while a young guy washes dishes  
the man she knows smokes a cigarette barely touches her fingers  
his right her left  
he might want her to meet his mother  
he wants to kiss her

the soda jerk tidying up is telling jokes  
everything closed the light and air ash

golden glare from the window

one other man wears a darker fedora his back to us...

she's looking at the paper in her hand  
a green tab scribble indicating how much is owed for coffee  
a ticket to the movie down the street torn in half after she entered

the check for the meal paid for by that man  
who is afraid to look at her he might be  
her estranged lover her mystery father a respected former teacher  
who recognized her gifts

or what's on that paper is  
the cure for cancer or its unmentionable diagnosis

a misplaced laundry ticket a receipt for luggage long gone

a fortune cookie she found in her pocket telling her that luck comes  
to those who have an open heart while everything's closed

on that paper she's staring at  
you can find bits and pieces  
everything you need to know about

this poem I'm writing