

Parentheses

I like the invitation of parentheses,
the way they enclose a digression,
soften an admission, cushion a fall from grace,
curve arms around the shoulders of slight misfits,
procrastinators, dodgers, fibbers, wallflowers,
throat clearers, hemmers and hawers.

Like small ribs, they hold the lungs of an idea
straining to jump onto an orange boxcar
coupled to the train of thought,
a small notion relieved to be hoisted aboard,
a freeloader (more or less) on the rattling journey
of certainty chugging across the page.

Synesthesia

Instead of listening to the news, I sort poems,
reading first lines of favorite writers, aware

slowly, of the colors of the words, colors that are old friends
taken for granted, perhaps from alphabets and primers

quietly showing up: brown *hope*, gray *lines*, red *bicycle*,
yellow *death*, blue *morning*. They rest on the page,

faded patches in a quilt, content to be the backdrop
of some inner play. I see my grandmother now

in dress and apron in her kitchen with the light green booth
way back by the window, the white enamel table

in the middle of the room. I watch her push cooked apples
round and round through a tall metal cone on legs, point down,

perforated all over to let drops of velvet sauce ooze
and slide into the large tan bowl underneath.

The applesauce is deliciously brown, like *hope*,
the hardwood pestle is varnished and brown

as it circles through the soft wet chunks, pressing,
pressing, far away from the news of the day.

Comet

To walk uphill in the mist in the morning
when the wind is down and cold air cools the cheeks

to feel hips and thighs relax into rhythm
knees calves ankles feet

to notice lungs and heart
the bellows and bass of this tiny symphony

undirected no baton waving the flutes in
while the strings hold back

to be present in this earthly body
this vessel of known miracles

this universe of undiscovered power
to simply walk to the store drop cards into a mailbox

with everything working skin eyes ears mind
the mail truck the traffic rules all in sync

is to receive faith in this blinding world
to be part of a pattern that works in this moment

works well enough to lead you through your younger life
into your older with tools that fit your hands

with another's hands that touch your face
with other faces that bring such melting

with this body that seems to be you
until like a comet tumbling

fast through the night
body burning

your light escapes

touch movement thought breath
leaving love

aching
in your starry wake