

## **Cabbage Poems and others**

## Two Cabbage Poems

i.

The lips of the winter cabbage  
part purple to speak  
from its loamy bed:

*Black.* I am learning  
to miss less the shape of you  
than the ways being near  
could pierce time

could take an hour  
and shoot it through with light.  
What's left

but be where you are?  
The coffee steams like compost.  
Everything that speaks  
speaks of loss.

Keep walking.  
Regard the cabbage:  
its smooth skull silent.

ii.

the sky is noticeably bigger now  
but airless, *weird blue*

everyone is talking about science  
fiction, David Lynch

in the produce aisle  
we chest-pass a cabbage

and clouds of powder  
rise from our gloves

we lock it in the fridge  
no one knows what to do with it

perched bagless on the high shelf  
it watches the produce

it thinks  
its chilled, ponderous thoughts

i know its flesh  
in cross section would reveal

a labyrinth of folded air  
but as it is

it is cold  
menacingly whole

at night i feel the refrigerator ease open  
i feel its laboratory light crawl across the floor

and i tell myself  
the only thing to do  
is stay still

## Winter Harbor

The slim omen of a moon  
rotates to nothing

the black water  
blinks with stars.

Even through the window  
red-ringed with chili lights

even laying on the shag carpet  
and through the din of bottles, we hear it:

the sound of a softness  
coming to an end

but can't it *wait*? We're sick of signs,  
tired of specters rising

from our cigarettes.  
We're tired of anything, really,

that isn't muppets caroling  
or the rubber nubs of our

chintzy foot massager. The fact is  
you can't remember the last time

you felt this *okay*.  
Good. In the morning

four doves in a row  
smash into the kitchen window.

It's nice to be somewhere  
beauty startles, but *god*

give us crows, give us  
more obvious augurs, *please*.

The black water ruffles in the breeze  
and it comes:

the serpent of your sadness  
wings someway upwards  
beneath the dawning water.

## Little Song of Separation

My love  
turn your face  
from the closing door  
the vacuum of space  
this minimum wage breakfast  
I want you

I want to see you  
your face transmuted by copper  
by a hundred miles of aching train track  
I want to be your alchemical conductor  
and bend you the way light falls  
I want to bring spring to your veins  
and pull clean water from your cracked clay  
I want Japanese maple from your lips  
steaming of April

God help me  
my tongue is a capital city  
bombed out by words — clear the streets  
tuck me into the corners of your mouth  
our kids will be congressmen, and so what?  
We haven't raised this flag for years.

Listen  
I want us decrepit, rankled, and naked  
incapacitated  
I want us oxidized — let's oxidize.  
Let our chests  
barnacle over with verdigris.  
This pedestal becomes us  
and we become the bright  
green ashes of history.