

## Katydid Killer

I taste your sweatsweet dripping  
From the sunpoisoned air.  
I know that somewhere beyond reason  
There is unashamed release.

Your hair is blacker than boysenberry  
And it sticks to your chin as if dripping  
From your bloodred tongue.  
Beyond selfconscious care  
There will always be fury and delight.

When I say I can taste you I mean  
Your ghost is in my marrow  
And your screams are already  
Deep inside my throat.

## Collapse

Like a window left open  
Winter after winter, like

A knock on the weathered door  
And never a reply, I

Am a ghost town. I swallow  
The plains around me,

I clear out warehouses, drive  
Even the coyotes from town.

You're only riding by, just a little  
Blue girl on a bike, but

Sickness spreads, and once its enters you,  
You can never pull every tendril out.

Radioactive, gleaming with kinesis,  
You begin your rapid decay,

Halving and halving, baking in the sun  
Until you are nothing but

A wisp of a receipt from the  
Drugstore, a dying echo on the asphalt

Wall, My bottle cap, my seesaw,  
My aluminum clink.

## Everything Gets Harder

Everything gets harder: the ground  
Packed tight under days of snow, teeth and  
Fingertips as winter beats on, scraping itself  
Through the gaps in the window frame.  
There are holes in us too—the chill  
Reaches deep into your lungs and it's harder  
To say exactly what you mean. You open  
The refrigerator door, just to see the pop  
Of light, the rows and rows of boxes  
And bottles. You try to speak and  
Your voice drops away. It's okay—  
I'm trying to love you harder.  
I mean the things I say now, I clean  
The dishes you forget, I stop myself  
From waking you when I'm afraid.  
There are things we'll never say  
To one another, things we hoard that wedge  
Themselves between us when we sleep,  
But you're warmer in the morning.  
Things could be a whole lot harder.

## I'm Afraid of the Things You Keep

After that night you wouldn't  
Touch peaches for a week.  
You said something had happened  
In the produce section, in your dream,  
A floor full of grease and blunt objects.  
In the morning you kept running  
Your fingers along my jaw, to make sure  
It was still there. I'm sorry about the peaches,  
You said. It's gruesome, you said, blood  
And cooking oil don't mix. I should have  
Told you to stop, I should have said that  
Dreams aren't real until you wake up

And you choose to remember. I'm afraid  
Of the things you keep: the sound  
The sedan made outside our window  
The night of the thunderless rain  
And the scream of whatever it smashed.  
You couldn't find anything, even standing  
In the driveway, soaking in your pajamas.  
You carry every day the smell of the clinic  
The day you told me you thought you would die  
(There was nothing wrong with you at all)  
And you've memorized the official list  
Of ongoing worldwide conflicts. You keep  
Imagining me gunned down or gagged up  
But this is not a war. You and I  
Are safe for now, are warm and loved  
But you keep forgetting the days  
Spent on windy beaches, the hours  
Of firelight and spice-dark tea,  
The kind old woman who gave you a nickel  
When you came up short at the cider mill,  
The minutes when you first fall asleep,  
Dreaming nothing, listening, knowing  
A word from me can wake you up.

## Shotgun Dreams

The sheets are swirled with memory and sweat. Last night I flailed and shuddered and pulled you closer, hardly still a second before a dream would take me and I would begin to murmur the illusions away. Now I am leaden and trembling; I think I ran for miles in my sleep. Sometimes I can control my dreams. Sometimes I stare down the barrel of the shotgun and I say, "I know this isn't real." I look into the glassy eyes of my dead mother and I say to her, "Wake up." I see you wading out to sea, and I run in and pull you back.

I don't remember what I dreamed this time. I only see the scratches on the pillowcase, the split ends creeping up to my temples, the quilt lying lifeless across the room. Light crashes in through the yawning windows, and I grope for something to cover my eyes, rocking myself, still murmuring, still trembling, still shying from shadows, not remembering what is real and what only seems to be. The bed beside me empty, the house silent, the day dragging by, I remember: I kept pulling you closer, and you sleepwalked away.