



[Because in all your life you've lived]

Because in all your life you've lived always the same twelve hours
though you remember them otherwise the years with their numbers
the months the anonymous weeks because you don't understand how
so many differences accrete in the sameness of days because the barn
is again empty the meadow strewn with both sweet and rue because
the horses acquiesce daily to those thin fences because holy means
wholly most surely alone because you believe the horses to be small
gods and because the gods this morning have rolled in mud and have
thundered but again did not jump because when you speak of the horses
the angels bare and gnash their sharpened teeth because the dark belongs
only to itself but the stars don't mind if you call them your own because
you are the water living between the ice and so many stony places
because you too are all tide and fence all rise and rail because we assemble
the world with imperfect senses because therefore we can never fully
understand because there is a fence between one moment and the next
and this is the fence we acquiesce to and we name that fence time the way
we say event horizon for all that which cannot escape because the horses
did once escape and swam from the sea in storm and wreck and because
they never again left but once oh once were never had never been here



[Snowfields]

And I wonder sprawled on the curved recurved back
of the hill the towers of clouded sky crushing the horizon
flat I want to know how to strip the griefstorm from the flesh
flense the spirit scrape it down to the clean bone unbreaking
make it take in stride another raw dawn these days of snow
on cold on frozen take in stride this place of glass and ice
this place knit stitched pierced by the shadows of all those
departed birds begin again to assemble linens pillows
blankets scarves the small soft comforts cushions cradles
learn how to lay me down in something other than danger
other than fury ice and risk learn to stop dropping this body
into snowfields making these empty shapes learn to stop
waiting for them to be filled

[Let the blue earth spin]

The heart beats its thin fists
against the bones the rails
the heart the heart rails against this
silence this absence I count
every imaginable
thing
stars scars streetlights the endless succession
of nights the heart we say
the heart for what
gets chipped by the facts of the
matter
you let the blue earth spin you let time zone you
let this clotted afternoon
unspool
because what if the soul's deciduous
what if antlers leaves and teeth
what if something
decorates that way breathes through this
what if this is the way you fall what if

into an abiding sky

[Things the realtor will not tell the new owner]

When she left she left so many ghosts the whole place is
poisoned with them their stray sadnesses untraceable scents
those cold holes in the very air so when you wake your throat
choked with tears having dreamt some strange some other
beloved you never knew and know is gone and this morning
desperately miss don't panic please please rise instead into
the groundmist walk out among her patient anchored trees
her ghostbear is there but will offer no harm will pace hungry
wary and finally away there too the ghost coyotes who filled
her nights with difficult with strange music you'll hear her
ghostbirds the hawk as a tiny falling wind the owls of winter
dying like prayers the morning flight of songbirds who carve
her shape into the yard with their swerving whose young
are born into the feel and smell of her hair rise and walk
through all of it to the lake next door you'll find her spot
on shore you'll let those borrowed those inherited tears
join hers the ones she shed so long ago you'll let small fish
rise to the drops salted and falling it will all feel familiar
to them and like she's come home so go about your days
in phantom pain as if your own life had been badly amputated

then badly sewn back but when you weary of it slip
into that room ease down on the bed the one she left
and left and left again when you lie down you choose the other
side you sleep in sleep your arm reaches to where her back
once curved you pull her impossibly toward you nest rest
like that but wherever it is she is she and all her creatures
sleep on uncomforted and alone

[Salt]

Encased in snow flakes breaking from cloud sky
falling still a practiced collapsing too cold to cling
fine and weightless waking again from dreams of you
cheeks and the slight hollows at the edge of sight
stained salt stained like the ground stained white
once the world thought snow and snow was all
it wanted humans salt the roads to make them safe
for travel an exit strategy part cold part slow bitter
ribbon white for journeying white for grief Carthage
sacked and salted and the Portuguese duke of Aviero's
house pulled down his gardens sown with salt a stone
for betrayal saying here on this land nothing may be built
for all time I don't want to spend the days in the fields
trying to plant the nights seeding the ground with salt
if memory is what I have I'd rather do without



[Dear god I ask]

nothing for myself as much of what I love is changed
to salt and stone and ocean only the meadows the deer
the flicker of trees in timelapse light flicker of trains
these endless metal departures dear lord I ask only this
for myself that the stars come evenings out of the black
dark sky the snow fall enough to muffle the ping of pipes
freezing in the walls that the barn dear lord I ask that
there always be a barn built of the carved up bones
the sky once leaned so heavily upon the wood weathered
into silver into slivers and whorls be indifferent to us
dear lord be gentle with your angels for they know
only how to fail sing lullabies to the broken the sleep
deprived the flailing failing the falling and the galloping
along sing lullabies to the storm climbing each horizon
neither bridle nor ever try to tame our beloved Leviathan
nor any one of your strange creatures let us run if that be
our desire let us run into grass and gale and sharp wire
fences into long crumbling afternoons let us run
back into what we thought was home even when
even though sometimes as now the barn be made
wholly be made entirely of fire



[Bezoar]

Tell me how to want this world this world that swallows
so much that sends so much of what I love into the ground
tell me how to want the rain again how to hope when
the rain has never fallen not once for 180 days tell me
how to want that ocean of days tell me how to love the graves
the ones we collect into grassy matched sets in dry green seas
and the others the ones we disperse into trees and creatures
as if ash were delicious as if when he said take eat he meant
burn this flesh to cinder for this is my body for this is
the future forget the blood the flesh the wind the wine
swallow instead every ground-down bone make of love make
of despair a bezoar make of the body a body make of a hole
a potion against the poison of all the days just now dawning
all the days of coming dust of hunger of nothing left to hunger for

[Wrong]

How the ground gives some things back cicadas for instance
how seventeen years of gone years of nowhere here years
of not cicada and now the swarm now frailglass wings and
now mouth and now devour the flowers too tucked sucked
back down confined in their own pockets their purses of
save and wait wait all summer fall all winter and then again
they come somehow different somehow exactly the same
how worms curl nest and feast in fallen whalebone how not
one of them becomes the whale lost in the pressured dark
how the mouth of the river dies in the mouth of the ocean
this sad equation of water unequal to water how the swan's
obscene neck curls in the muck like a question the world
keeps refusing to answer or always answers wrong

[Invocation]

And sometimes the soul quiets in the cells curls furls
idle silent and still sometimes the soul comes to rest
and what wakes after another night of darksinging skies
is star-nosed mole is maybe dormouse sparrow or wren
some creature of nearly no color nearly no consequence
a being entirely simply itself a being no longer in love
with its own event horizons the soul wakes tangled
in roads dirty with oceans and season under a sky
wan and pale the small furry soul pokes its head
into the cold is reborn sans teeth eats gravel small stones
for the quiet grinding deep inside oh small spidersilk soul
soul of the feathered frost and the good brown garden
sticky persistent soul small hollow-boned ghost of sky
and journey oh slight soul teach me how to hold on
to all of this teach me please oh lord how to let go

[Nest]

And I want to say that the heart hangs there at the end of things
wavering a little a bit unsteady this vessel this hotel for transients
this lodge that takes the shape of a wasp's nest paper and swaying
and I want to say hey listen to this my body is a tree full of branchings
full of venom hum and sting full of wild creatures hunger leaves
and leavings hey listen I say hold that soft nautilus ear just so and
you can hear this colony collapse all the tiny dyings can hear
this lantern hung hissing and unlit when a light deserts its wick
the heart goes dark the heart becomes just one more vessel waiting
to sail waiting for the wind listen to the word vessel its desire
its desire to carry various cargoes its need to practice departures
hush now the sails are going up the sun is going down the people
on shore wave small scraps of fabric they're white in the dusk
like wings they're white in the dark like surrender