

## [Actias luna]

Dear god dear ghost dear ghostgod and dearly departed  
dear mother and dear water you own each other now  
tangled in blue molecular hollows in the always arriving  
rain we own your porches your wornwood docks all those  
swaybacked summer places dear god you are not were not  
the water not coming always toward us in blood and tide  
in particles and waves dear god you should know  
I'm no one's shore no one's ocean dear darkness dear forest  
dear pale flutter dear light-impaled luna dear all the secret  
ways of wood and water dear fire and dear myriad scars  
dear god this is not faith this is a moth born silent born  
without mouth this is a soul in painful molt to winged hungry  
and dying in the dark this is a single green angel lost in chemic  
quest in the narrow June night this is the white bright cross  
stained with a thousand tiny lives tiny deaths this is the light  
we mistake for light this is the might as well be dead beloved  
dear god dear thief you stole them both dear god dear wrecker  
no matter what you think what you might have thought  
this is not a love letter

## [What I mean]

You must understand when I say heart say broken say  
angel god when I say love and say death those huge  
small words you should distrust something language  
me the ravine vast gap between what flickers in the mind  
and what stumbles into language stumbles the way  
I stumble into the woods walk lost walk directionless  
walk allowed each day only to listen and come later  
aching crazed and at peace to some edge some river  
of water dirt or rarely pavement and nobody asks and  
still what tolls through the night is what did you do today  
and you remake your day into story into language I walked  
I say I sent the blood to punish the heart that fine red engine  
I sent the body against again the world that huge construct  
one fraction of which is all I will ever travel I sent the body  
so I could feel it there in the forest thickets glades and rivers  
feel the heat the heart's whole house shaken whole house  
shuddering I say god say angel though they may not exist  
as such though nothing is speaking to speaking for or  
through me so what name should I make for what got caught  
in this bleak this grief if not heart which is whole which is never

yet broken never even empty listen dear when I say heart  
what I mean is maybe boat that thin-sailed machine tumbled  
in a storm's grinding path when I say broken what I mean  
is small craft warning is storm beyond any storm this body  
can make or endure what I mean is too far from shore is maybe  
no shore no ocean is sounding again those old familiar depths  
and when I say depth what I mean is fathom meaning a measure  
of how far down to dig a grave meaning the span of a man's arms  
meaning stranded go deeper meaning I don't understand

## [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

## [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

## [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