

## LEDGER

POEMS

JANE  
HIRSHFIELD

BOOKS BY JANE HIRSHFIELD

| POETRY |

*Ledger*

*The Beauty*

*Come, Thief*

*After*

*Given Sugar, Given Salt*

*The Lives of the Heart*

*The October Palace*

*Of Gravity & Angels*

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| ANTHOLOGY |

*Women in Praise of the Sacred: 43 Centuries of Spiritual Poetry by*  
*Women*

# LEDGER

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POEMS

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JANE  
HIRSHFIELD



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## LET THEM NOT SAY

Let them not say: we did not see it.  
We saw.

Let them not say: we did not hear it.  
We heard.

Let them not say: they did not taste it.  
We ate, we trembled.

Let them not say: it was not spoken, not written.  
We spoke,  
we witnessed with voices and hands.

Let them not say: they did nothing.  
We did not-enough.

Let them say, as they must say something:

A kerosene beauty.  
It burned.

Let them say we warmed ourselves by it,  
read by its light, praised,  
and it burned.

#

## THE BOWL

If meat is put into the bowl, meat is eaten.

If rice is put into the bowl, it may be cooked.

If a shoe is put into the bowl,  
the leather is chewed and chewed over,  
a sentence that cannot be taken in or forgotten.

A day, if a day could feel, must feel like a bowl.  
Wars, loves, trucks, betrayals, kindness,  
it eats them.

Then the next day comes, spotless and hungry.

The bowl cannot be thrown away.  
It cannot be broken.

It is calm, uneclipsable, rindless,  
and, big though it seems, fits exactly in two human hands.

Hands with ten fingers,  
fifty-four bones,  
capacities strange to us almost past measure.  
Scented—as the curve of the bowl is—  
with cardamom, star anise, long pepper, cinnamon, hyssop.

## I WANTED TO BE SURPRISED.

To such a request, the world is obliging.

In just the past week, a rotund porcupine,  
who seemed equally startled by me.

The man who swallowed a tiny microphone  
to record the sounds of his body,  
not considering beforehand how he might remove it.

A cabbage and mustard sandwich on marbled bread.

How easily the large spiders were caught with a clear plastic cup  
surprised even them.

I don't know why I was surprised every time love started or ended.  
Or why each time a new fossil, Earth-like planet, or war.  
Or that no one kept being there when the doorknob had clearly.

What should not have been so surprising:  
my error after error, recognized when appearing on the faces of  
others.

What did not surprise enough:  
my daily expectation that anything would continue,  
and then that so much did continue, when so much did not.

Small rivulets still flowing downhill when it wasn't raining.  
A sister's birthday.

Also, the stubborn, courteous persistence.

That even today *please* means *please*,  
*good morning* is still understood as *good morning*,

and that when I wake up,  
the window's distant mountain remains a mountain,  
the borrowed city around me is still a city, and standing.

Its alleys and markets, offices of dentists,  
drug store, liquor store, Chevron.  
Its library that charges—a happy surprise—no fine for overdue  
books:  
Borges, Baldwin, Szymborska, Morrison, Cavafy.

## VEST

I put on again the vest of many pockets.

It is easy to forget  
which holds the reading glasses,  
which the small pen,  
which the house keys,  
the compass and whistle, the passport.

To forget at last for weeks  
even the pocket holding the day  
of digging a place for my sister's ashes,  
the one holding the day  
where someone will soon enough put my own.

To misplace the pocket  
of touching the walls at Auschwitz  
would seem impossible.  
It is not.

To misplace, for a decade,  
the pocket of tears.

I rummage and rummage—  
transfers  
for Munich, for Melbourne,  
to Oslo.  
A receipt for a Singapore *kopi*.  
A device holding music:  
Bach, Garcia, Richter, Porter, Pärt.

A woman long dead now  
gave me, when I told her I could not sing,  
a kazoo.  
Now in a pocket.

Somewhere, a pocket  
holding a Steinway.  
Somewhere, a pocket  
holding a packet of salt.

Borgesian vest,  
Oxford English Dictionary vest  
with a magnifying glass  
tucked inside one snapped-closed pocket,  
Wikipedia vest, Rosetta vest,  
Enigma vest of decoding,  
how is it one person can carry  
your weight for a lifetime,  
one person  
slip into your open arms for a lifetime?

Who was given the world,  
and hunted for tissues, for chapstick.



## AN ARCHAEOLOGY

Sixty feet below the streets of Rome,  
the streets of Rome.  
Like that, I heard your voice, my life.  
Like that I listened.

I listened  
as to neighbors who live  
behind the back wall of a building.

You know the voices of them,  
the arguments and re-knittings,  
the scents of their cooking and absence.  
You know their plosives, gutturals, fricatives, stops.

Say to any who walk here,  
“How are you?”  
Ask where some bar or café might be found.  
You could talk together, and drink,  
and find your own neighbor.

But ask your life anything, ask it,  
“How did this happen? What have we come to?”  
It turns its face, it hums as a fish-hiding sea does.

*FECIT*

for a person in love, the air looks no different

for a person in grief

in this my one lifetime,  
while reading, arguing, cherishing, washing, watching a video,  
sleeping,  
the numbers unseeably rise—

305 ppm, 317 ppm, 390, 400

shin of high granite ticks snow-less the compound fracture

I who wrote this

like the old painters  
sign this:

*JH fecit.*

DAY BEGINNING WITH SEEING THE INTERNATIONAL  
SPACE STATION AND A FULL MOON OVER THE GULF  
OF MEXICO AND ALL ITS INVISIBLE FISHES

None of this had to happen.  
Not Florida. Not the ibis's beak. Not water.  
Not the horseshoe crab's empty body and not the living starfish.  
Evolution might have turned left at the corner and gone down  
another street entirely.  
The asteroid might have missed.  
The seams of limestone need not have been susceptible to sand and  
mangroves.  
The radio might have found a different music.  
The hips of one man and the hips of another might have stood  
beside  
each other on a bus in Aleppo and recognized themselves as long-  
lost brothers.  
The key could have broken off in the lock and the nail-can refused  
its lid.  
I might have been the fish the brown pelican swallowed.  
You might have been the way the moon kept not setting long after  
we thought it would,  
long after the sun was catching inside the low wave curls coming in  
at a certain angle. The light might not have been eaten again by its  
moving.  
If the unbearable were not weightless we might yet buckle under  
the grief  
of what hasn't changed yet. Across the world a man pulls a woman  
from the water  
from which the leapt-from overfilled boat has entirely vanished.  
From the water pulls one child, another. Both are living and both  
will continue to live.

This did not have to happen. No part of this had to happen.

AS IF HEARING HEAVY FURNITURE MOVED ON THE  
FLOOR ABOVE US

As things grow rarer, they enter the ranges of counting.  
Remain this many Siberian tigers,  
that many African elephants. Three hundred red-legged egrets.  
We scrape from the world its tilt and meander of wonder  
as if eating the last burned onions and carrots from a cast-iron pan.  
Closing eyes to taste better the char of ordinary sweetness.

## DESCRIPTION

Humans: beings directional,  
symmetrical.

With left and right hands,  
left and right feet,  
ears that hear lullabies  
from one side or the other,  
nostrils that know fear or food  
from one side or the other.

Beings who sneeze  
while following a trail  
through wet woods  
to whose asters and mosses  
two eyes bring stereoscopic depth.

Sometimes, it's true, the ears mishear:  
*death.*

Sometimes the feet's direction is only away.

Sometimes the hands misunderstand their task.  
They tremble.  
They ask their wrists: *This?*

Fingers with such sensitive nerve ends,  
such solicitude holding a chisel or cello,  
they thought they were meant to inflict only beauty and kindness.

## ANTS' NEST

“On Being the Right Size,” Haldane’s short essay is titled.

An ants’ nest can be found at the top of a redwood.

No bird that weighs less than \_\_\_\_.

No insect more than \_\_\_\_.

The minimum mass for a whale, for a language, an ice cap.

In a human-sized room,  
someone is setting a human-sized table with yellow napkins,  
someone is calling  
her children to come in from a day whose losses as yet remain  
child-sized.



## A BUCKET FORGETS ITS WATER

A bucket forgets its water,  
its milk, its paint.  
Washed out, re-used, it can be washed again.

I admire the amnesia of buckets.

How they are forthright and infinite inside it,  
simple of purpose,  
how their single seam is as thin of rib as a donkey's.

A bucket upside down  
is almost as useful as upright—  
step stool, tool shelf, drum stand, small table for lunch.

A bucket receives and returns all it is given,  
holds no grudges, fears,  
or regret.

A bucket striking the mop sink rings clearest when empty.

But not one can bray.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Oddly, I liked them,  
liked answering,  
as I liked to look  
at a tree or a mountain  
and hear their own questions,  
undistracted and steady.  
As I liked to look at a horse  
who would sometimes look back.

Each was a small emergency,  
a requiring.

Pressing, we say:  
a pressing question.

As if something were oil within us  
that could be released  
and then cooked with,  
as if something in us could be lit  
and set bowl-held to burn,  
its yellow light going one way,  
its scent another.

As one by one  
did the questions,  
along with their schoolrooms,  
hospitals, offices for hiring—  
tests forced and tests chosen,  
tests minor, tests idle,

tests factual or subjective,  
taking with them  
the filled-in and empty bubbles,  
the provisional guesses,  
the clear-as-day answers,  
taking with them  
the right, the wrong, the ink,  
the pen, my own unanswerable life.

YOU GO TO SLEEP IN ONE ROOM AND WAKE IN  
ANOTHER

You go to sleep in one room and wake in another.  
You go to sleep in one time and wake in another.

*Men land on the moon!—*

Viewed in blurred black and white, in static,  
on a big screen in Central Park, standing in darkness with others.

Your grandfather did not see this.  
Your grandchildren will not see this.  
Soon now, fifty years back.

Unemphatic, the wheelbarrowed stars hung above.

Many days, like a nephew,  
resemble the one beforehand,  
but they are not the one beforehand.  
Each was singular, spendable, eaten with pepper and salt.

You go to sleep in one person's bed and wake in another's,  
your face after toweling changed from the face that was washed.

You go to sleep in one world and wake in another.

You who were not your life nor were stranger to it,  
you who were not  
your name, your ribs, your skin,  
will go as a suitcase that takes inside it the room—

Only after you know this can you know this.

As a knocked glass that loses what has been spilled, you will know this.

## CHANCE DARKENED ME.

Chance darkened me

as a morning darkens,  
preparing to rain.

It goes against its arc,  
betrays its clock-hands.

The day was a dark-eyed giraffe,  
its unfathomable legs  
kept walking.

A person is not a day,  
not rain,  
no gentle eater of high leaves.

I did not keep walking.  
The day inside me,  
legs and lungs, kept walking.

## SOME QUESTIONS

Who first asked it?  
The sand or the footprint,  
the remembering or the forgetting?

\*

A house, a door, an hour—  
which is frame, which picture?

\*

Where found, old grief-joy,  
your salvage-yard windows and shutters,  
your emergency, your emergence?

\*

Me, you / us, them—  
What  
molecule cell creature  
came first to feel it?

\*

Was it painful?

\*

How came separation to chisel,  
to cherish, to chafe?



\*

Hammock of burning carbon  
life wove from,  
hammock life slept in,  
unraveling—

did you find us useful,  
interesting,  
comic?

\*

Will you miss them,  
the cruelty and hunger,  
the manatees and spoonbills,  
  
awe's inexplicable swaying?

## TODAY, ANOTHER UNIVERSE

The arborist has determined:  
senescence      beetles      canker  
quickened by drought  
                         but in any case  
not prunable   not treatable   not to be propped.

And so.

The branch from which the sharp-shinned hawks and their mate-  
cries.

The trunk where the ant.

The red squirrels' eighty-foot playground.

The bark   cambium   pine-sap   cluster of needles.

The Japanese patterns      the ink-net.

The dapple on certain fish.

Today, for some, a universe will vanish.  
First noisily,  
then just another silence.

The silence of *after*, once the theater has emptied.

Of bewilderment after the glacier,  
the species, the star.

Something else, in the scale of quickening things,  
will replace it,

this hole of light in the light, the puzzled birds swerving around it.

THE ORPHAN BEAUTY OF FOLD NOT MADE  
BLINDFOLD

A house seems solid, and yet, in the living, any footstep shakes it.

As if walking in wind toward de Kooning's late paintings,  
whose brush had been tied to his hand.

"I sing not for the music,  
I sing to keep the bitterness from the sorrow,"  
hum the words of a *cante jondo*, far from their home.

A thought comes to your bed in the night.  
You accept, take it blindly, by darkness,  
as you once did a love—  
feeling the bed starting to tremble before it was entered.

Not knowing whose the wanting, whose the beauty,  
but wanting that wanting.

The salt shine and

blundering toward it. Blundering and blundering toward it.

#

## NOW A DARKNESS IS COMING

I hold my life with two hands.  
I walk with two legs.  
Two ears are enough to hear Bach with.

Blinded in one eye, a person sees with the other.

Now a great darkness is coming.  
A both-eyes darkness.

I have one mouth.  
It holds two words.  
*Yes, No,*  
inside all others.

*Yes. No. No. Yes.*

I say yes to these words, as I must,  
and I also refuse them.

My two legs,  
shaped to go forward,  
obedient to can't-know and must-be,  
walk into the time that is coming.

## WORDS

Words are loyal.

Whatever they name they take the side of.

As the word *courage* will afterward grip just as well  
the frightened girl soldier who stands on one side of barbed wire,  
the frightened boy soldier who stands on the other.

Death's clay, they look at each other with wide-open eyes.

And words—that love peace, love gossip—refuse to condemn  
them.



## HOMS

Wind this morning  
so strong the borrowed Florida house shakes  
on its stilts over water.

White pelicans, which do not resemble the spirit,  
write their single sentence  
straight through it, unhindered.  
Their rowing wings dipped long ago into some inkpot.

Rapacity doesn't swerve before what it feasts on.

To a not-fish, a bird is beauty.  
To a not-fish, hunger  
wrings out its morning swim-towel and re-hangs it.

Yesterday's Russian-drone-taken video,  
watched on computer:  
window after window, glassless, glintless.

Apartment blocks, streetlights, market squares  
past-plunged, deafened, unstoried.

Three incomprehensible men  
look up,  
wave at the camera from inside their shirts' bright colors.

Around them, the no-longer city.  
Its no-longer purses and breasts, esophagi, cellphones, slippers,  
suppers.

No fish-teeming world nor its spiraling wings can redeem this.

(No feather, shell, word, image redeem this.)

## SHE BREATHES IN THE SCENT

As the front of a box would miss the sides,  
the back,

the grief of the living  
misses the grief of the dead.

It is  
like a woman who goes to the airport  
to meet the planes from a country she long ago lived in.

She knows no passenger but stands near as they exit  
still holding their passports.

She breathes in the scent of their clothes.

## A FOLDING SCREEN

The news keeps coming,  
with its one crooked  
finger.

*death death death death death*

And one no longer turns at the call of her name,  
and another forgets to lift his surprised eyebrow.

While here the ducklings,  
and the duckling descendants,  
cross the squares of the centuries' gold-leafed painting,  
as if inside the crease of a still living river.

## PRACTICE

I touch my toes.

When I was a child,  
this was difficult.  
Now I touch my toes daily.

In 2012, in Sanford, Florida,  
someone nearby was touching her toes before bed.

Three weeks ago,  
in the Philippines or Myanmar, someone was stretching.

Tomorrow, someone elsewhere will bend  
first to one side, then the other.

I also do ten push-ups, morning and evening.

Women's push-ups,  
from the knees.  
They resemble certain forms of religious bowing.

In place of *one, two, four, seven*,  
I count the names of incomprehension: *Sanford, Ferguson,*  
*Charleston.*  
*Aleppo, Sarajevo, Nagasaki.*

I never reach: *Troy, Ur.*

I have done this for years now.  
Bystander. Listener. One of the lucky.

I do not seem to grow stronger.

## CATACLYSM

It begins subtly:  
the maple  
withdraws an inch from the birch tree.

The porcupine  
wants nothing to do with the skink.

Fish unschool,  
sheep unflock to separately graze.

Clouds meanwhile  
declare to the sky  
they have nothing to do with the sky,  
which is not visible as they are,

nor knows the trick of turning  
into infant, tumbling pterodactyls.

The turtles and moonlight?  
Their long arrangement is over.

As for the humans.  
Let us not speak of the humans.  
Let us speak of their language.

The first-person singular  
condemns the second-person plural  
for betrayals neither has words left to name.

The fed consider the hungry  
and stay silent.



## PAINT

Someone invented this.

If a person  
pees on a wall so painted,  
the pee splashes back,  
wets the pants, soaks the shoes.

Surprise! the wall says.

Someone thought this a good solution.  
Someone gave it a color.

## HEELS

Thump. Thump. Thump.  
I am back in my childhood apartment.  
Thump.  
Someone above is sleepless, again.  
Thump, thump.  
I agree:  
I, too, am now awake, sleepless.  
How uncomfortably we went on together,  
intimate and unmarried:  
16A, 15A.  
Sometimes a different sound,  
a jar of spilled marbles.  
More often: thump.  
Shared nights  
that seemed then forever.  
Though tonight it is only me.  
My own frightened heartbeat,  
my own once-childhood country.

## COLD, CLEAR

A person  
dreams herself blind  
hearing the click of a light switch.

\*

Forty years since the wake-up *han's*  
much battered ink-written  
“Don’t waste time.”

\*

Night-weather’s hearable.

Sometimes the mallet-sound sharp,  
other times muffled.

\*

Self, too, was hearable inside and outside  
the

skin  
inside and outside the scent of creek and pine.

\*

Stars, wind, day, night, pine bark.  
They don’t need us.

They don't need to be stars, wind, day, night, pine bark.

## CAPITAL: AN ASSAY

In the 1925 edition of *Roget's Thesaurus*, the first listing for “capital” appears, unsurprisingly, under the category of “money.” Among the list of synonyms, not very far down: *rhino*, *blunt*, *dust*, *mopus*, *tin*, *salt*, *chink*. Higher up: *sinews of war*, *almighty dollar*, *needful*. Lower: *wampum*, *lac of rupees*, *plum*. The word’s second-place index listing sends the reader to “wealth.” There you can find among its companion concepts: *El Dorado*, *Pactolus*, *Golconda*, *Potosí*; also the more easily comprehended but equally culturally dependent *alimony* and *dowry*.

The Pactolus, further research reveals, is a Turkish river near the Aegean coast. Its sediments contain electrum, a naturally occurring alloy of silver and gold. Electrum from the Pactolus underlay the economy of the ancient state of Lydia, the first Western imperium to issue coins and open shops. Electrum mixed—debased—with copper was known as “green gold.” According to myth, King Midas first deposited the riverbed’s stores of precious metals when he washed in the Pactolus to undo his curse. King Croesus’s legendary riches, according to Herodotus, were drawn from its waters. A photograph shows a pretty, greenish river passing between scenic white rocks.

In the midst of these readings, I find myself pausing to eat a small, flat peach of perfect color and ripeness. Gone in a few quick bites, in what is likely the last possible hour it will be good.

Though a peach’s ripeness will always elude “Possessive Relations”—the larger category in which all words related to “capital” appear—I take my pencil and add to the *Thesaurus*: *peach*. Surely no less incomprehensible to someone in the future than *rhino*, *blunt*, and *dust* are now to me. I write it not next to *plum*, but where there’s a bit of extra space: right after the entry

*loaves and fishes*, at the end of a list that begins *pelf*, *Mammon*, *lucre*, *filthy lucre*.

The presence of *plum* is explained—somewhat—in a dictionary of slang: *A desirable thing. A raisin, when used in a pudding or cake. (pejorative) A fool, idiot. (slang, usually in plural) A testicle. The edible, fleshy stone fruit of Prunus mume, an Asian fruit more closely related to the apricot than the plum, usually consumed pickled, dried, or as a juice or wine; ume*. I am oddly delighted to find that last, Japanese word in the entry.

A writer's capital is language, which, it seems, is as slippery as any other kind of wealth, as potentially cursed if held without nuance, as transient, as bluntly and inextricably subjective. A briefly borrowed inheritance; a street-found penny. In another ninety years, I can't help but wonder, will *penny* be a word so unfamiliar it too will need looking up, another *mopus*? Yet to be penniless will be just as painful when named in some other way.

## FALCON

Incapable of betrayal: a tree.

Incapable of holding a secret: a stone.

Without contempt for self or other:  
an ant, a bee.

Today I and the unhooded bird  
that sits on my head  
are looking in different directions,  
I into the blurring past, he into the blurring future.

How many other pasts and futures,  
between and around us, we miss.

Incapable of ungenerosity: grass;  
cut, it simply keeps growing.

Without obligation: mosquitoes.

How close to human  
must the breathed-in air come  
before it develops a sense of shame or humor?

Each day the falcon's view a little clearer.

## SPELL TO BE SAID AGAINST HATRED

Until each breath refuses *they, those, them*.

Until the *Dramatis Personae* of the book's first page says, "Each one is you."

Until hope bows to its hopelessness only as one self bows to another.

Until cruelty bends to its work and sees suddenly: *I*.

Until anger and insult know themselves burnable legs of a useless table.

Until the unsurprised unbidden knees find themselves bending.

Until fear bows to its object as a bird's shadow bows to its bird.

Until the ache of the solitude inside the hands, the ribs, the ankles.

Until the sound the mouse makes inside the mouth of the cat.

Until the inaudible acids bathing the coral.

Until what feels no one's weighing is no longer weightless.

Until what feels no one's earning is no longer taken.

Until grief, pity, confusion, laughter, longing know themselves mirrors.

Until by *we* we mean *I*, them, you, the muskrat, the tiger, the hunger.

Until by *I* we mean as a dog barks, sounding and vanishing and sounding and vanishing completely.

Until by *until* we mean *I*, we, you, them, the muskrat, the tiger, the hunger, the lonely barking of the dog before it is answered.



#

## ADVICE TO MYSELF

The computer file  
of which  
I have no recollection  
is labeled “advice to myself”

I click it open  
look  
scroll further down

the screen  
stays backlit and empty

thus I meet myself again  
hopeful and useless

a mystery

precisely as I must  
have done  
on August 19, 2010, 11:08 a.m.

## NOTEBOOK

A Venus flytrap can count to five.  
Crows and bees recognize faces.  
Mice suffer when seeing a mouse who is known to them suffer.  
Trees warn one another to alter their sap as beetles draw near.

Our one remaining human distinction:  
a pre-Copernican pride in our human distinction.

“Arthritis in both ankles!”  
Neruda wrote in a notebook,  
January 3, 1959, on a boat leaving Valparaíso for Venezuela,  
limping like an old racehorse, then starting his poem.

## IN ULVIK

He spent his whole life in Ulvik, working as a gardener in his own orchard.

*(of Olav Hauge)*

I, too, would like to work  
as a gardener in my own orchard.  
Every Friday I would pay myself  
a decent, living wage,  
taken in foldable cash from my own wallet,  
and sometimes, if the weather was bad,  
I would give myself the day off  
and thank myself for my kindness  
and answer myself, It's nothing, nothing, go on now,  
put your feet up, find somewhere warm.  
And then I would go back into my house  
and think of my kindness  
and wonder if my gardener was warm now also  
and if I was right to let myself  
go away from my own orchard's tending  
even so briefly, and each of us  
might be thinking, too, of the apples,  
cold and wet and hanging in outside wind  
and fattening on their own trees without us,  
and one of us, first, then the other,  
might start to wonder a little,  
while pushing a cut of cured applewood into the fire,  
about loneliness and separateness and what  
it is lives outside one person's skin and inside another's.

## O SNAIL

Under the Svalbard ice cap, Carboniferous-era coal seams.

A good farmer rotates her crops.

The crops don't complain. It's the fate of stalks and forests to  
vanish.

Last year's fires: Australia, Portugal, Greece. This: California.

O snail, wrote Issa, climb Fuji slowly, slowly.

## BRANCH

A clock does not have hands, a face,  
tell anything, rightly or wrongly, least of all time.

An empty branch does not long for its nondescript bird.

The bird is not the quick dash  
that holds separate the world's *Yes* from the world's *No*.

Is there anywhere on earth one branch that has never been perched  
on?

That is not what branches exist for. Yet the birds come.

## WITHOUT NIGHT-SHOES

All night,  
sonatas played left-handed,  
inside a loaned iPod.

Neither sleeping nor waking,  
I walked their unshod stairways,  
up and then down.

On some blackboard inside the house,  
the word *fear*  
vanished.

On some blackboard inside the house,  
the word *far* vanished.

Then the word *error*, then *or*.

Grave and slender,  
those hours unhoured themselves,  
stair by stair vanished.

C minor, E flat, F sharp, A sharp erased them.

## THE BIRD NET

I once decided to pretend to be angry.

Then I was.

As a bird is caught in its birdness before it is caught in the bird net.

The bird might be counted, tagged, released.

The bird might be eaten.

It took hours for the shaking to leave my body.

Body of air, body of branch, what earth's yellows & nectars were  
made for.



## CORALS, COHO, COELENTERATES

I keep a white page before me.  
Each time one  
is marred with effort, striving, effect, I turn to another.

Corals, coho, coelenterates  
inside the waving arms of your branches  
that give off a scent intoxicant only to certain fish—

lichens, burdocks, mycelial mats between trees—  
forgive this hubris.

Some hope is in it.  
Your companions are new here.

A child who crayons does not know  
her drawing leaves behind absence on forest, on ocean.

She falls into the colors.

## TO MY FIFTIES

You opened me  
as a burglar opens a house with a silent alarm.  
I opened you  
as a burglar opens a house with a silent alarm.

We knew we had to work quickly,  
bears ecstatic, not minding the stinging.

Or say it was this:

We were the wax paper bag  
in which something was wrapped.  
What was inside us  
neither opaque nor entirely transparent.  
Afterward, we were folded into neat creases.

Or this:

Say we were paired  
parentheses  
cupping two dates, a hyphen,  
and much that continues unspoken.

Say:

We were our own future,  
a furnace invented to burn itself up.

## BROCADE

All day wondering  
if I've become useless.

All day the osprey  
white and black,  
carrying  
big dry sticks without leaves.

Late, I said to my pride,

*You think you're the feathered part  
of this, do you?*

## INTERRUPTION: AN ASSAY

Sometimes you took the shape  
of an unseen mosquito,  
sometimes of illness.

Presumed most of the time to be passing,  
yet importunate as a toddler  
who demanded her own way,  
as a phone that would not stop ringing long after it should.

Unignorable pavement slap of the gone-flat tire.

All afternoon the thunder was interrupted by sunshine.  
All night the rain was interrupted by trees and roofs.

And still, as rusting steel is uninterrupted by dryness  
and hunger uninterrupted by sleep,  
interruption and non-interruption sat in the day's container  
as salt sits in milk, one whiteness disguised by another.

As a fish in a tank is interrupted by glass, and turns,  
a person's fate is to continue  
despite,  
until.

Death: an interruption not passing,  
weighing  
one hundred and fifty-eight pounds,  
carried on cut plywood with yellow straps.

Birth: an interruption between  
two windows,  
trying to think of any joke, any tune, that is new.

Between them:  
this navigation by echolocation and lidar,  
the weathers of avalanche, earthquake, tsunami,  
firestorm, drought;  
a moment that sets down—gently, sleepily—its half-read novel  
on a bedside table whose side turned toward the wall stays  
unpainted,  
confident the story will be there again come morning.

## MY DOUBT

I wake, doubt, beside you,  
like a curtain half-open.

I dress doubting,  
like a cup  
undecided if it has been dropped.

I eat doubting,  
work doubting,  
go out to a dubious café with skeptical friends.

I go to sleep doubting myself,  
as a herd of goats  
sleep in a suddenly gone-quiet truck.

I dream you, doubt,  
nightly—  
for what is the meaning of dreaming  
if not that all we are while inside it  
is transient, amorphous, in question?

Left hand and right hand,  
doubt, you are in me,  
throwing a basketball, guiding my knife and my fork.  
Left knee and right knee,  
we run for a bus,  
for a meeting that surely will end before we arrive.

I would like

to grow content in you, doubt,  
as a double-hung window  
settles obedient into its hidden pulleys and ropes.

I doubt I can do so:  
your own counterweight governs my nights and my days.

As the knob of hung lead holds steady  
the open mouth of a window,  
you hold me,  
my kneeling before you resistant, stubborn,  
offering these furious praises  
I can't help but doubt you will ever be able to hear.

## MY CONTENTMENT

I reject contentment:  
into it, certain inexperienced saints have been seen to vanish,  
in a burst of somewhat cloudy light.



## MY HUNGER

The way the high-wire walker  
must carry a pole  
to make her arms longer

you carried me    I carried you  
through this world.

## MY LONGING

My hope, my despair, my longing.

Every pocket I put you in had its hole.  
Mouse and moth, too, have their hungers.

I called you my life.

Good dog, I said, good dog, as if we could answer.

## MY DIGNITY

My dignity drinks with me  
a cup of coffee, with sugar and milk,  
in a bathrobe.

My dignity, this day,  
neither adds to nor subtracts from  
the dignity of any other.

My dignity, this one day,  
closes its ledgers.

Its luxury, this day, is coffee, sugar, and milk.  
Is having enough to want nothing.

Soon my dignity,  
unwitnessed, unwitnessing,  
will dress  
in clothes no one will judge for their wrinkles,  
in skin no one will judge for its fit.

My dignity, I know,  
could be taken from me easily,  
invisibly, in a single pickpocketed instant.  
An errant driver. An errant rock. An errant anger.

My own heart could take it—  
one moment, drinking coffee,  
the next—

My own breast or marrow could take it.

But my dignity and I do not apologize  
to one another,  
this day,  
nor, this day, profess to more than we can.

I know I will someday say to my dignity:  
It's all right, I know it is time,  
leave if you must, live elsewhere.

Take with you, like a good sous-chef,  
your towel-wrapped knife and whetstone,  
your luck-bringing ladle.

## MY GLASSES

Glasses can be taken off.  
The world instantly softens, blurs.  
The pattern of carpet  
or leaves out a window,  
words on a page,  
the face in a mirror.  
Blurs,  
even the war that is coming,  
pushing its iron boat-shape  
onto the sand of a beach not far  
but not seen;  
even the silences coming,  
following the boat  
as a swimming dog follows its master.  
Lu Chi, poet and scholar,  
born into a family of generals,  
was executed  
in the thirty-fifth year of the Xī Jin dynasty,  
after his soldiers' bodies  
blocked the Great Yangtze.  
The Yangtze went elsewhere,  
blurring the nearby fields.  
Merciful blurring, merciful forgetting.  
Meeting Lu Chi's name.  
I think of his image of culture  
as one axe handle shaping another,  
I think of his thought about unpainted silk.  
Each of the Yangtze dead

had a mother, a father, wife, children,  
a well, some chickens.  
No, the largesse of glasses is not seeing.

## MY WONDER

That it is one-half degree centigrade.

That I eat honeydew melon  
for breakfast.

That I look out through the oval window.

That I am able to look out through an oval window.

MY SILENCE



#

## A REAM OF PAPER

I have a ream of paper,  
a cartridge of ink,

almonds,  
coffee,  
a wool scarf for warmth.

Whatever handcuffs the soul,  
I have brought here.

Whatever distances the heart,  
I have brought here.

A deer rises onto her haunches  
to reach for an apple,

though many fallen apples are on the ground.

## LURE

I waited though wanting nothing,  
then waited longer.

As if by that I might  
become again  
the carved and painted lure—

Its two iridescent eyes that stay always open,  
its stippled gold sides, deep orange back,  
red threads attached at the gills.

I hummed with its three-pronged shine  
of fish who are sweet and fat to the birds above them.

I hummed with its three injured notes to the fish below.

To all the blue-winged, handless distances  
and all my blue-finned, handless lives,  
I hummed  
in borrowed Swedish and the iron-hiding slip of gleam—

*The great strangeness still may come, even for you.*

## A MOMENT KNOWS ITSELF PENULTIMATE

A moment knows itself penultimate—  
usable, spendable,  
good yet, but only for reckoning up.

A moment knows something's almost over,  
but not what it is.

There is still time, the day sings its old round, time still is here,  
though you can't hear  
the new thing arriving inside the knots of its ticking,

though you can't feel the brush of its wing  
on the nape of your life,

or hope for the voice  
to arrive, as it has always, saying,  
"Come, I've returned to you, here is your gift."

The moment finds itself weary,  
blinded,  
language confuses its ears.

Some things that are frayed  
can be  
turned inside out, can be darned, can be quilted.

Others are used up completely.

It's like the custom for the widow at certain funerals—

Friends speak,  
children,  
the many and long-disguised lovers.

The widow's task is different.  
She does not speak.

## BLUEFISH

We once threw  
empty soda cans out bus windows,  
thoughtless  
as all of our kind.

Mice, rabbits.

That changed.  
The highways grew prettier.

On one coast, we ate Oregon forests.  
On the other, cod banks and bluefish.

Teethed, we were.  
Handed.  
Mammals needing to nap,  
to leap a little when happy or frightened.

## ALMOND, RABBIT

Each thing you eat,  
another future disappears from the future.

Its nests,  
its lichens, thirsts, fleas, spiders.

And if you yourself now were eaten,  
you would taste of almond or rabbit,  
not future.

Some futures you might have liked more,  
some less.

Birds enter and leave them elsewhere.

## THE PAW-PAW

A woman speaks to me  
of a paw-paw tree.

I have never seen a paw-paw tree.  
I have never eaten its fruit.

I nod.  
The conversation continues.

So many things  
we think we understand,  
until we stop to think.

Her life.

My own.



## MUSA PARADISIACA

Outside the window  
big eight-foot leaves  
lift taller  
than the height of the island they rise from.

Green faces unmoving,  
rain runs down and outside their nearness.

—*else*      *there*      *when*—

Such thoughts do not touch them.

The rain does not touch them.  
They stand.

Only I at a night window,  
thinking,  
as if from inside the hull of a handmade boat:

*Though it is not words that turn you,  
chlorophyll sorrow,  
do not abandon here your faithless servants.*

## IT WAS AS IF A LADDER

It was as if  
a ladder,

and each rung,  
real to itself,  
round or slat,  
narrow or wide,  
rope or metal—

and as you ascended,  
real to yourself,  
the rungs directly above  
you solid,  
directly beneath you, solid.

Scent of peeled orange  
mixed with gasoline,  
sound of hammers.

Farther below,  
the rungs one by one vanished.

Farther above,  
the rungs one by one  
vanished.

And the side rails' lines  
vanished, as into  
a drawing by Brunelleschi.

Scent of peeled orange  
and gasoline,  
sound of hammers.

Grip now, night-dog, your barking:

this ladder in air,  
invented by others, received by others.

## LIKE OTHERS

In the end,  
I was like others.  
A person.

Sometimes embarrassed,  
sometimes afraid.

When “Fire!” was shouted,  
some ran toward it,  
some away—

I neck-deep among them.

## HUSBAND

Some things can surprise you in both directions,  
coming and going.

Like a stretch of single train track with shuntings over.

The auto-correct I don't know how to stop  
suggested, just now, "overwhelming,"  
*with shuntings overwhelming*. Almost I took that.

Almost I took you as husband, love. Then you left me.

I took surprise for husband instead.

The Phoenician letter for "h," pronounced *heth*,  
resembled at first  
a slanting, three-runged ladder.  
Later it straightened, becoming a double-hung window.

Husband surprise, I climbed you, I climbed right out you.

## WILD TURKEYS

Two remnant-dinosaur wild turkeys  
walk between silence and silence. Not to themselves a meal of  
meat.

I, who am to myself also not meat, feed mosquitoes nightly,  
though day and night I wait for hunger  
to find me its dark wood violin, inside its dark wood case.

## NINE PEBBLES

### *Without Blinking*

House a little cold, stomach a little hungry,  
hands a little empty.

The planet is porous, wrote Borges, and so it might be claimed  
that all men have bathed in the holy Ganges.

Sponges alone,  
that live always filled, may filter this thought without blinking.

### *Like That Other-Hand Music*

Like that other-hand  
music  
written for one who has lost an arm in a war,  
you, hope, may again become useful.

### *Retrospective*

No photograph or painting can hold it—  
the stillness of water  
just before it starts being ice.

*Library Book with Many Precisely Turned-Down Corners*

I unfold carefully the thoughts of one who has come before me,  
the way a listening dog's ears  
may be seen lifting  
to some sound beyond its person's quite understanding.

*Now Even More*

Now again, even more, I admire Roget,  
in whose *Thesaurus*  
*self-knowledge* appears under *Modesty*.

Following *verecundity*—knowing one's place;  
preceding *reserve*.

*Haiku: Monadnock*

November rain—  
two bronze deer turn to face me  
as I pass.

*A Strategy*

Continuing by implication.  
Anywhere the ink isn't is moon.



### *Sixth Extinction*

It took with it  
the words that could have described it.

### *Obstacle*

This body, still walking.  
The wind must go around it.

## THEY HAVE DECIDED

Comes a time they have decided who you are.  
But you have not decided who you are.

Your wrists have decided.  
Your knees have decided.  
The hair that will leave its braidings behind has decided.

Your ears, your rebelling ears,  
have decided: enough.  
They surrender cities, pianos, sentences, whistlings, cries.

Your thoughts, it seemed once, had decided.  
But you, past naming, past weighing, have not decided.

Like a foal still trying to find which leg goes where for standing:  
you have not decided.

## THINGS SEEM STRONG

Things seem strong.  
Houses, trees, trucks—a chair, even.  
A table. A country.

You don't expect one to break.  
No, it takes a hammer to break one,  
a war, a saw, an earthquake.

Troy after Troy after Troy seemed strong  
to those living around and in them.  
Nine Troys were strong,  
each trembling under the other.

When the ground floods  
and the fire ants leave their strong city,  
they link legs and form a raft, and float, and live,  
and begin again elsewhere.

Strong, your life's wish  
to continue linking arms with life's eye blink, life's tear well,  
life's hammering of copper sheets and planing of Port Orford cedar,  
life's joke of the knock-knock.

*Knock, knock.* Who's there?  
*I am.*  
I am who?

That first and last question.

Who once dressed in footed pajamas,  
who once was smothered in kisses.  
Who seemed so strong  
I could not imagine your mouth would ever come to stop asking.

## DOG TAG

At last understanding  
that everything my friend had been saying  
for the thirty-three months since he knew  
were words of the dog tag, words of, whatever else,  
the milled and stamped-into metal of what stays behind.  
*Blackcap Mountain. Blue scorpion venom. Persimmon pudding.*  
He spoke them.  
He could not say love enough times.  
It clinked against itself, it clinked against its little chain.

## BIOPHILIA

Most of us hungry at daybreak, sleepy by dark.

Some slept, one eye open, in water.

Some could trot.

Some of us lived till morning. Some did not.

#

## AMOR FATI

Little soul,  
you have wandered  
lost a long time.

The woods all dark now,  
birded and eyed.

Then a light, a cabin, a fire, a door standing open.

The fairy tales warn you:  
Do not go in,  
you who would eat will be eaten.

You go in. You quicken.

You want to have feet.  
You want to have eyes.  
You want to have fears.



## SNOW

Little soul,  
for you, too,  
death is coming.

Was there something  
you thought  
you needed to do?

Snow  
does not walk into a room

and wonder

why.

## KITCHEN

Little soul,  
how useful was hunger.

From whatever it was we fell into,  
you and I,  
it sprang open our fingers' grip.

Yet a life is not prepared for its ending  
like a sliced eggplant,

salted and pressed to let leave from itself what is bitter.

## HARNESS

Little soul,  
you and I will become

the memory  
of a memory of a memory.

A horse  
released of the traces  
forgets the weight of the wagon.

## RUST FLAKES ON WIND

Little soul,  
a day comes when retrospection ceases.

A person falling does not, mid-plummet, look up.

Still,  
for a few seconds on Wednesday,  
“Where are my truck keys?”

On Thursday, on Sunday: “Where are my truck keys?”

## PELT

Little soul,  
the book of your hours  
is closing

over its golds,  
its reds, your gazing dog,  
your rivers, ladders,  
rib cage.

A life  
turns into its patterns and perfumes,  
then into its pelt.

I don't know now  
if we were one, if we were two,  
a stippling.

*Whither thou goest,*  
we'd said.

WOOD. SALT. TIN.

Little soul,  
do you remember?

You once walked  
over wooden boards  
to a house  
that sat on stilts in the sea.

It was early.

The sun painted  
brightness onto the water,  
and wherever you sat  
that path  
led directly to you.

Some mornings  
the sea-road was muted  
scratched tin,  
some mornings blinding.

Then it would leave.

Little soul,  
it is strange—

even now it is early.

I SAID

I said        I believed  
a world without you unimaginable.

Now cutting its flowers to go with you into the fire.

#



## LEDGER

Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* is 3,592 measures.  
A voice kept far from feeling is heard as measured.  
What's wanted in desperate times are desperate measures.  
Pushkin's unfinished *Onegin*: 5,446 lines.

No visible tears measure the pilot's grief  
as she lidars the height of an island: five feet.  
Fifty, its highest leaf.  
She logs the years, the weathers, the tree has left.

A million fired-clay bones—animal, human—  
set down in a field as protest  
measure 400 yards long, 60 yards wide, weigh 112 tons.  
The length and weight and silence of the bereft.

Bees do not question the sweetness of what sways beneath them.  
One measure of distance is meters. Another is *li*.  
*Ten thousand li* can be translated: "far."  
For the exiled, *home* can be translated "then," translated "scar."

One liter  
of Polish vodka holds twelve pounds of potatoes.  
What we care about most, we call *beyond measure*.  
What matters most, we say *counts*. Height now is treasure.

On this scale of one to ten, where is eleven?  
Ask all you wish, no twenty-fifth hour will be given.  
Measuring mounts—like some Western bar's mounted elk head—  
our cataloged vanishing unfinished heaven.

## IN A FORMER COAL MINE IN SILESIA

In a former coal mine in Silesia, a thousand feet inside the earth,  
a tongue kept speaking.

In the Arctic, by the triangular door to the Svalbard seed vault,  
a tongue almost fearless, almost not clumsy, spoke.  
Spoke verbs, conjunctions, adjectives, adverbs, nouns.

In a small town in the Australian Outback,  
in the city of Nanjing, near a gate still recalling unthinkable  
closures,  
by a lake in Montana, a tongue almost steady,  
almost not stumbling, spoke facts, hypotheses, memories, riddles,  
stories.

Lungs accept their oxygen without trembling.  
Feet stand inside their foot shapes, inside shoes someone has sewn.

We close the eyes of the dead so they will not see their not-seeing.  
Light falls on the retinas' stubbornness, on pupils refusing to turn  
toward or away.

Fireflies, furnaces, quicksilvers fill them, cities & forests glinting  
though already  
finished,

And the tongues, the faithless tongues, continue speaking,  
as lovers will, because they still love, long past the hour there is  
nothing left to say.

ENGRAVING: WORLD-TREE WITH AN EMPTY BEEHIVE  
ON ONE BRANCH

A too-beautiful view rejects the mind.  
It is like a person with a garrulous mouth but no ears.

When Bashō finished his months of walking,  
he took off his used-up sandals,  
let them fall.

One turned into the scent of withered chrysanthemum,  
the other walked out of the story.

It's only after you notice an ache  
that you know it must always have been there.  
As an actor is there, before he steps in from the wing.

Another of Bashō's haiku:  
a long-weathered skull, through whose eyes grow tall, blowing  
grasses.

They look now into a photograph,  
a scraped field in France, September 1916:  
men bending, smoking, gleaning the harrowed rucksacks for letters.

War, walking, chrysanthemum, sandal, wheat field, bee smoke of  
camera lens, war.

They're in the past, yet we just keep traveling toward them, then  
away,  
carrying with us the remnant, salvageable,

refugee honey.

(NO WIND, NO RAIN)

No wind, no rain,  
the tree  
just fell, as a piece of fruit does.

But no, not fruit. Not ripe.  
Not fell.

It broke. It shattered.

One cone's  
addition of resinous cell-sap,  
one small-bodied bird  
arriving to tap for a beetle.

It shattered.

What word, what act,  
was it we thought did not matter?

## ON THE FIFTH DAY

On the fifth day  
the scientists who studied the rivers  
were forbidden to speak  
or to study the rivers.

The scientists who studied the air  
were told not to speak of the air,  
and the ones who worked for the farmers  
were silenced,  
and the ones who worked for the bees.

Someone, from deep in the Badlands,  
began posting facts.

The facts were told not to speak  
and were taken away.  
The facts, surprised to be taken, were silent.

Now it was only the rivers  
that spoke of the rivers,  
and only the wind that spoke of its bees,

while the unpausing factual buds of the fruit trees  
continued to move toward their fruit.

The silence spoke loudly of silence,  
and the rivers kept speaking  
of rivers, of boulders and air.

Bound to gravity, earless and tongueless,  
the untested rivers kept speaking.

Bus drivers, shelf stockers,  
code writers, machinists, accountants,  
lab techs, cellists kept speaking.

They spoke, the fifth day,  
of silence.

PAGE

It waits now for snows to fall  
upward, into a summer  
whose green leaves  
still vanish,  
but back into branch, into sap, into rain.

It waits for the old  
to grow young, fed and unfearful,  
for freighters to carry their hold-held oil  
back into unfractured ground,  
for fires to return  
their shoe boxes of photos and risen homes.

It unbuilds the power line's towers  
before the switch can be toggled,  
puts the child, rock still in hand, back into his bed.

A single gesture of erasure  
pours back into truck and then river  
the concrete wall,  
unrivets the derrick,  
replenishes whale stocks and corals.

And why not—it is easy—restore the lost nurse herds  
of mammoths to grazing,  
the hatched pterodactyl to flight?  
Let each drowned and mud-silted ammonite once again swim?

One by one unspoken, greed's syllables, grievance's insult.



One by one unsewn, each insignia's dividing stitch.  
One by one unmanufactured,  
unimagined: the bullet, the knife, the colors, the concept.

Reversal commands: undo this directional grammar of subject and  
object.

Reversal commands: unlearn the alphabet of bludgeon and  
blindness.

Reversal commands: revise, rephrase, reconsider.

And the page, malleable, obedient, does what is asked.

## MY CONFESSION

Immortal soul, I did not believe in you.

Against the age's preference,  
I wanted for your markings and history  
the markings and history of, say, a small zebra—

slightly implausible, far from unique,  
one visible pelt meant to disappear into the crowded many,  
one dark stripe alive among the crowded many.

You seemed to want to go on separately.  
You seemed to want elsewhere, and more.

I wanted less. One moment to pause  
while setting kibble out in a dish for the calico cat  
who might or might not  
be inside the box when it finally opens.

One goldfinch holding the whole Mesozoic discovery,  
hunting for seeds and hungry,  
escaping, a few moments longer, the cat also hungry.

This dilemma cannot be solved,  
and will be.

My immortal soul, perhaps you went into an *Archelon ischyros*,  
swimming with its sea-turtle nose above water,  
then diving.

Immortal soul, had you existed,  
what more than that cold water could we have wanted?

## GHAZAL FOR THE END OF TIME

*(after Messiaen)*

Break anything—a window, a piecrust, a glacier—it will break  
open.

A voice cannot speak, cannot sing, without lips, teeth, lamina  
propria coming open.

Some breakage can barely be named, hardly be spoken.  
Rains stopped, roof said. Fires, forests, cities, cellars peeled open.

Tears stopped, eyes said. An unhearable music fell instead from  
them.

A clarinet stripped of its breathing, the cello abandoned.

The violin grieving, a hand too long empty held open.

The imperial piano, its 89th, 90th, 91st strings unsummoned,  
unwoken.

Watching, listening, was like that: the low, wordless humming of  
being unwoven.

Fish vanished. Bees vanished. Bats whitened. Arctic ice opened.

Hands wanted more time, hands thought we had time. Spending  
time's rivers,

its meadows, its mountains, its instruments tuning their silence, its  
deep mantle broken.

Earth stumbled within and outside us.

Orca, thistle, kestrel withheld their instruction.

Rock said, Burning Ones, pry your own blindness open.

Death said, Now I too am orphan.

## MOUNTAINAL

This first-light mountain, its east peak and west peak.

Its first-light creeks:

Lagunitas, Redwood, Fern. Their fishes and mosses.

Its night and day hawk-life, slope-life, fogs, coyote, tan oaks,  
white-speckled amanita. Its spiderwebs' sequins.

To be personal is easy:

Wake. Slip arms and legs from sleep into name, into story.

I wanted to be mountainal, watalal, wrenal.

## MY DEBT

Like all  
who believe in the senses,  
I was an accountant,  
copyist,  
statistician.

Not registrar,  
witness.

Permitted to touch  
the leaf of a thistle,  
the trembling  
work of a spider.

To ponder the Hubble's recordings.

It did not matter  
if I believed in  
the party of particle or of wave,  
as I carried no weapon.

It did not matter if I believed.

I weighed ashes,  
actions,  
cities that glittered like rubies,  
on the scales I was given,  
calibrated  
in units of fear and amazement.

I wrote the word *it*, the word *is*.

I entered the debt that is owed to the real.

Forgive,  
spine-covered leaf, soft-bodied spider,  
octopus lifting  
one curious tentacle back toward the hand of the diver  
that in such black ink  
I set down your flammable colors.



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*The Atlantic*: "Lure," "The Paw-Paw"

*Australian Book Review* (AU): "Interruption: An Essay"

*Brick* (Canada): "The Bowl," "A Moment Knows Itself Penultimate," "You Go  
to Sleep in One Room and Wake in Another"

*The Cortland Review*: "They Have Decided"

*Guernica*: "Practice"

*Mānoa*: "A Bucket Forgets Its Water"

*The Massachusetts Review*: "Without Night-Shoes"

*Michigan Quarterly Review*: "The Bird Net," "Falcon," "A Folding Screen"

*The New Republic*: "Homs"

*The New Yorker*: "Ants' Nest," "Husband," "I wanted to be surprised.," "Things  
Seem Strong," "Wild Turkeys"

*The New York Review of Books*: "Day Beginning with Seeing the International  
Space Station and a Full Moon over the Gulf of Mexico and All Its Invisible  
Fishes," "My Confession"

*T: The New York Times Style Magazine*: "Engraving: World-Tree with an Empty  
Beehive on One Branch"

*Noon: Journal of the Short Poem*: "Haiku: Monadnock," "Notebook," "A  
Strategy," "Without Blinking"

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*Poets.org / Academy of American Poets Poem-a-Day*: “Dog Tag,” “Let Them  
 Not Say,” “My Doubt”  
*Salamander*: “Now a Darkness Is Coming”  
*The Southern Review*: “Almond, Rabbit,” “A Ream of Paper”  
*Spillway*: “She Breathes in the Scent”  
*Terrain.org*: “Spell to Be Said Against Hatred,” “Today, Another Universe”  
*The Threepenny Review*: “Capital: An Essay,” “In a Former Coal Mine in  
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## A NOTE ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jane Hirshfield is the author of nine books of poetry, including *Ledger*; *The Beauty*; *Come, Thief*; and *Given Sugar, Given Salt*. She is also the author of two collections of essays, *Nine Gates: Entering the Mind of Poetry* and *Ten Windows: How Great Poems Transform the World*, and has edited and co-translated four books presenting the work of world poets from the past. Her books have received the Poetry Center Book Award, the California Book Award, and the Donald Hall–Jane Kenyon Prize in American Poetry, and have been finalist-listed for the National Book Critics Circle Award, long-listed for the National Book Award, and short-listed for England’s T. S. Eliot Prize. Hirshfield has received fellowships from the Guggenheim and Rockefeller foundations, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Academy of American Poets, and is an inducted member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Her poems appear in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The New Republic*, *Harper’s*, and *Poetry*, and have been selected for ten editions of *The Best American Poetry*. A resident of Northern California, she is a former chancellor of the Academy of American Poets.



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