

II

EXACTLY LIGHT

I WILL MARRY THE MORNING

I will marry the morning
at our wedding she will wear white
silken cloud angel fingers
veiling her tresses of gold.

I will not shout at her
even when we quarrel (which happens
more than you'd guess) even when
she takes forever at her vanity
before we go out dancing.

And when it is very late I will
sit with her in the firelight,
and she will quietly close her eyes
as I trace my fingertips along her brow
and gently braid birds
into her hair.

DRIVING ON THE EXPRESSWAY AT
6AM

Driving on the expressway in the crumpled
morning light, that
 hazy deep blue heavy

light between dawn and night
 when you can barely
make out the twisted, cracked bones
of deer who didn't make it
 to the other side

and cold clouds come
 to the low places
among the twiggy dried stumps of last year's
 crops, and
 creep slowly out across the road
 covering the twisted
 cracked concrete corpses
those silkspun, stretched sinews of
brokenness.

I AM SORRY ABOUT THE
POMEGRANATES

I am sorry about the pomegranates and the salted butter and the eggnog and I am sorry for not noticing your careful glances and your knowingly silent stares and I am sorry for not perceiving quietly your whimpers as you fell asleep and for not seeing with my own eyes the way a warm wreath of light leafs over the auburn moments in your hair. I am sorry for not hearing you. I am sorry for not telling you with the sound of my own voice how dear you are to me under any sky, more than any red rose or blue bird or silver softly snow, my darling you are so much more than printed text or even—astonishingly—handwriting, and so I wish I knew how to be a way to tell you mostly in my mind what means only that you deserve more than poems.

LOVE IS A TERRIBLE

Love is a terrible thing—
for just a moment, aren't
we falling or flailing
or maybe failing, knowing
sooner or later we will or won't
understand what it means to
really be alive not alone, but
alove which is exactly light

CONTRADICTION

Sudden
tenderness
is not
a contra
but it is definitely
a diction
and probably
addiction

IN THE SILENT PRAYER

Muttering and the light comes in
white light casting undulations in and
out and in and out of focused projections
of clouds that creak or that
moan or buzz and fidget and squirm
And in the silent prayer
a child always cries.

This morning even angels would wonder what
time their alarms were set, and fluttering
their eyelids, rocking their chairs
curling their toes, anything to keep
from falling asleep, anything for an “amen”
And in the always silent prayer
a child cries.

“Lord hear our prayer,” and he hears it
alright, that’s why he made sure
the Catholics and the Anglicans knew
the use of breadcrumbs as stilts
to hold open the eyelids
And in the silent prayer
an always child cries.

What if all these distractions were
sacraments, Jesus said “I will give you rest,”
I think that entitles me to let my eyes
droop for a moment while some weird words
are muttered in midmorning haze
and in the silent always prayer
a child cries.

JUSTINE'S BIRTHDAY POEM

Here is a deep red remembrance
of buoyancy, of rushing water,
of membranes bursting outward,
splayed back, flung wide like
curtain drapes on a cool morning
in autumn when colors are everywhere
yes, everywhere when colors are
colors when everywhere it flows
outward from the center of a woman,
spills out in slow motion, gliding
like watching a cup of wine fall—
Then we burst forth—we float,
In Time and Space, O Soul
that is what it is like when you
are born, when the universe is shouting
let space expand, let the stars cool
let them become blue, deep red and yellow,
let people explode from their centers
let them splay back, and bright
effulgent crowns of petals fall open
suddenly bursting with colors everywhere

RAIN WHO IS MANY FINGERS

Rain who is many fingers
pointed down,
rain who cannot be counted
by the stars,
rain who has a thousand names
and who is yet nameless,
rain who falls faster than snow
especially in summer,
rain who is a thousand renditions
of yes,
rain who pricks the earth
and crocuses rise out,
rain who is justly fog,
—only bigger,
rain who falls lightly on your shoulders,
rain who falls hard on my face, and

rain who does everything
on purpose, especially
the way it dapples my spectacles,
and the way it coats your hair,
so that even when the sun
is not shining,
there is light.