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## A small bird sings for miles

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*A small bird sings for miles*

Senior Project Submitted to  
The Division of Languages and Literature  
of Bard College

by  
Sophie Gregory

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

May 2021

*This collection is dedicated to my professor and mentor,  
Michael Ives,  
a poet, a guide, & a friend*

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*Dawn Chorus*

*Snowlight*

Like the neck of a deer  
bent in tall grass.

And the wind tumbles out  
onto the rocks and reeds –

moves the grains.  
Bluebells tinkle in a wood.

The sleeping owl moons her eyes  
a quarter-sized drop of cream.

Stars fall, crystals dwindle.  
Without light

darkness is simply  
not.

*Phosphenes*

My head turns to the pillow  
incubus a rudder  
of the Horseshoe crab  
silking lines in smooth sand  
the wind brings by the falconry  
darners and blue tails  
a home found in  
a blanket of grass

oh sing me a whistle

*Hypnagogia*

I see rushing eyes  
are the bull bells in the woods  
at the bottom of a mountain

And yet there are ruminations there  
empty and countless

Always a bird outside there  
always a call parted  
wide like wings

Sometimes just a song  
falling like air-grip and feather

A narrow wren swings its tail up  
in steady beats and down  
hits the ground with a great boom  
like an ancient drum

The wings of a Cormorant fan out  
but the ocean is a dark color  
even in the light of day

*Bluejay Rally*

My ear puckers  
into sound before sight

the bluejay is black  
in dream

before the light  
refracts him blue

sometimes racket  
is a canal

of liquid bright  
light in the ear

like a pupil  
d i a l a t i n g

starry nebulas  
in realized time

hands cup  
the sun away

sight bruised  
like a child's tight fist

knuckling  
against her eyes

open and the world  
adjusts into easeful day

*Spring Blink*

Tulips rise red  
from a stone garden.  
A moon spills light  
in a dawn-petaled sky.

When the pouring lures me back  
into expanses of douglas fir  
each day clean ringlets  
lie on my cheeks  
each day twinkling  
I wake with myself  
in the pirouette of morning.

Spring is where  
the trees ring bells  
and I won't say no  
to the day, to the sun  
to rolling down grassy hills  
tumbling and falling  
again and again.

*Daylilies*

a young rain  
meets foliage  
along its way

hushed by violet light  
she wakes to tall bamboo

a bird lands, the branch shakes  
morning grows  
from the dark soil of night

a blouse dries stiff on the rack  
she blows smoke  
across the Japanese garden

the rain on her skin collects as dew  
low-hanging clouds float  
over the stones

this path  
hand-laid

*Homeland*

A home is not a house  
a cup, a pipe, a wallet    maybe

What makes a home  
but a coin purse  
stashed in the memory drawer  
NO  
a rock, a knoll, the grass    closer

*Prayer*

It's the evening sky  
you await  
the geese  
beneath or  
within

You're just a prayer  
fleeting  
cherry blossom  
with feelers tucked  
deep

Everything  
a rooted  
ripple  
rings  
below  
a  
universe  
wholly

Onesome

*You Sow the Field, the Seeds Grow in Good Soil, They are Tended by Your Brothers and Sisters, They are for Everyone*

so to be tender

*Osprey and Son*

as if the whole sky  
descended  
with the raptor  
    gleaming wet  
    arriving  
    from a recent dive  
        the fish-hawk  
        with thrashing wingspan  
        and dark malars  
            – a shaded mask –  
            cuts the sun glare  
            in a beating settle  
                the osprey cradles  
                a striped bass  
                talons ease  
            a limp haul  
            down  
            toward a nestling  
                a neck stretched  
                and a succession  
                of dry  
                sweet screeches

*My Father and His Dog*

slits, light, weather  
clouds, indeterminate  
to kitchen  
day start  
slipper shuffle, familiar  
the refrigerator door opens  
hums  
hands, bags, mug  
routine motions  
he scoops the fine grounds  
in soft piles

close by  
claws stretch  
scratch downward  
gold, old pup

*Light Shadows*

*She Said With Such Wonder, I've Never Seen So Many Swans Before in My Life*

the pair of us, my mother and I

watch the bevy rest in fifties on the bay

an early moon wanes a candle

above a wintering grounds

nature is not a thing of expectation

for the miracles these water nurse

where a Pen rests with her cygnets

and Mute Swans coo

between the blank road

and the shelter

of the inlet

nothing speaks

*Let Me Grow Grey and Wise*

what is wise must  
cultivate some grey

to one day flourish  
an old, white swan

cherish each age  
each softening day

it's a simple thing  
to forget an hour

you lost your heart to  
years ago

*A Day Before Becoming Full*

she was  
a moon  
in the  
afternoon  
sky

her sun-  
sunken  
breasts

ready  
for a  
moment's  
notice

for a  
ray  
of light

*To the Last Day and All Her Life*

... But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
Too full for sound and foam,  
When that which drew from out the boundless deep  
Turns again home. ...

– *Alfred Lord Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar"*

Old cat, blue eyes closed in a square of sun, I saw you sleeping by the echinacea yesterday  
your tail curled, poised as if by summer's breath, one paw rounded, the other out-stretched,  
toes unfurling, an irregular bloom of palms opened to the skylights.

A cat is everything's cat: dust in a gully, sifted into air, water, grass, rain in the clouds, where you  
rest, now and always, my pie-in-the-sky.

Swift twirls of stalks reeling the water lily round, ripples, facts, last days, contradictions.

Maybe you're the mind's chimera.

I'll hear you, perhaps, I'll walk with you in the heart of a meadow, one ear swayed to a cicada  
rubbing its wings.

I'll listen as you drift through the air, while you lull me gently, nearby, in another afternoon.

*As if Empty*

is not empty  
but full of words  
already  
let thoughts strain

to move  
is over  
it's a wonder  
we've gotten  
anywhere

*Stink Bug Finis*

Dark raisin  
in the sun

in throes  
on its back.

I cup  
cradle

its night  
in my daytime.

Its sun, a  
twitchy sleep

hopes, still  
to dream.

The balancing act of birdflight depends on the fact that the creature is suspended on its own airy axis. But this axis is everything and everywhere all at once; it maintains its own center but is undefined by spatial limits – like God, the bird is a sphere whose center is everywhere – red-tailed hawk, a sound-and-body omen.

Coming close to a red-tailed is like gazing at the sun, but the bird's silhouette defines its humble essence. Like an icon, there is the sense that the red-tailed arrives at that golden hour, when the stark image of the buteo raptor, perched and meditating on the circumference of all land, atmosphere, water, reveals itself, a blessing.

Broad chest, and shoulders - the Red tailed is beyond, just like Buteo Buddha, but also shares its Buddha nature with all creatures, moving in the spirit of the grand ever-flow, while paying close attention to the moment and to the rhythms around.

*The Names of God*

Today I heard the names of God  
tangled between the woods and the bays  
You reached out with your names, God, one bough away  
beyond the river bend, I leaned in, I listened.

Today I heard your names.  
I hear you, whitecap of the cosmos, a ripple consuming the pond:  
God, flora in the gale, zephyr in a tree, a willow's silhouette in the wind  
a zen garden and a grey-catbird, the movement of slow light across a stone wall  
God, young grass and bamboo shoots, pollen glittering with your clear signatures  
the corn prayer for the snapping song that picks the crop, the field-mice left dancing to the night  
I'll listen again just to hear you say: the plains, the lakes  
meadows, mountains, peaks, ponds, and brooks.

Your names battering above, hatched butterflies with wet paper wings.  
God, in the sunlight drifted without limit, proof in a small bird's migration overseas  
verifications sloshing on the riverbanks, lying low in steaming muds:  
God, the seaweed, the tides of plumed waves, shorelines purpled with algae  
God, the sky pinked, feathers tucked in nests, the first song of the robin  
God, the garden and the garden snake, the vineyard and the hummingbird  
God, mountain passes and sheep bells  
in the forest, in the old trees, in the cedars, in the redwoods.  
Today I heard your names,  
I heard the names of God.

I am the mysterious tracts of swallowtails  
I am the first hue in an autumn leaf  
I am the falling snow on a starless night  
I am the clover crafted in your likeness  
I am the murmurations of the spring-come blackbirds  
I am the moon hung over the bays and the banks  
I am the silver light that the fish swim with, sing with

I am the clean rain come.

Dandelion who reaps death so sweetly  
its silent seeds in the silent air  
whisper soft praises  
and the birds and the trees that sing  
your name  
in darkness and in light –  
I hear you  
I listen.

*Blood Underwater is Smoke in the Air*

Geese formations  
veer mountains  
between mountains  
– no difference

A flower grows  
over the hill  
and out of view  
– beauty obscured

A vulture's shadow  
sails through trees  
– form flies veiled

Derope curtains  
of empty space  
– oh wisest of bodies

*Striking a Match*

Is the smoke you see  
smoke you know?

Flame you see  
flame you know?

Knew smoke?  
Know smoke.

Knew flame?  
Know flame.

Once upon a thought  
reborn is the fire, ash  
the air, the mist.

*What is the Opposite of My Shadow*

absence	caldera	yellow	noontime
boomerang			cave
	plurality		subtraction
AWOL			darkness
AWOL		black hole	loose light
		theoretical mass	
parrot			standstill
			sun ray
		water	glint
	static		

*Motion Dazzle*

driving down winter's early evening air close to snow

bare trees laid zebra-stripes black shadows along the way

rushing pavement murks the edge roadside blends thicket shade

cell refracts fast street-lights plasma pulses vacant warmth

sticks & snakes come out in darkness in the sun gone season

*Napp*

Light  
multiplied

in sunny  
silence

divided  
in darkness

quick as  
a wink –

A swainson  
thrush

takes its  
hundred-

-th nap  
of the day.

*Weathered Way*

*Cat Rain*

Wet leaves curl  
like a sleeping  
suggestion  
with one open eye

You're naked  
and the rain  
is watching you

## *Rain*

*Derived from Geological Survey Water Supply Paper 1535-G*

rain is volcanic emanation, bone, air, local dust

rain is sodium, ocean electrolytes

is cloud nuclei, phosphorescent algae

is cation smoke, ozone incense, soils and suns and iron salts

rain is bacteria, geosmin tickling the nostrils

rain is clay – shrinking, swelling, moving in the dirt

is lighting, fatty acids

is industrial fuels, water-soluble chemicals

rain is deep cracks in a cliff, the space between sands, water in the dunes

rain is chlorinous air, a copper-coated zinc penny called heads

rain is a recycled pool, percolating nimbostratus

magnesium, potassium, bananas from a singular ancient tree

rain is cold, hot, and just right, an arid and a tropical country

rain is a colorless gas, uninhabited, empty, abandoned, it is

land and water, loam, sea, and puddle, it is leftover

rain and more rain to come, is major, is minor,

upside down ion icon, a mudflat flipped

with roots shooting out space, a sponge

it touches skin like an oxygen blessing

the rain is the atmosphere of everything

falling out of everything

fallen out of everything

shaken loose from its origins

versed secret, anonymous so-and-so

the rain is an age-old song

*Soft Staccato*

pebbles patter constant  
cadence falling water voices  
of earth striking leaves stand  
in beats the petals ponds  
puddles repeat dropping  
*be rain be rain*

*Sprinkle*

winking pats  
on rhododendron  
foliage squared  
rain lady percusses  
her wet drum  
in the gutter

*Sanskrit for 'He Gets Wet'*

This world moves like an ice whale.  
Cloud, fog, glacier.

Swan tunnels fade away.  
An eider coat, the mutest blessing.

Street lights illuminate  
the diagonal descent of snow.

Flakes arrive from heaven –  
frozen rivers falling.

A crystalized agility brightens her eyes  
like nerves of vertigo.

The air advances.  
Winter is a scent seduction,

dissonance, a night spent praising god.  
Numb nail deep in a forgotten tree.

*Foot Fall*

A

black boot

lifts out –

white.

Comes back down

heel heavy.

Ball and bones

sink into

fresh snow.

Quiet crystals

fold in first

then air

compresses air.

Crunches

kneads

accordion-like

pressure

packs flat

and out

white

the boot

lifts.

*Snaw*

(Old English for snow)

harbinger | clean

slowly | forest

down | sunless

numbed | helix

subdues | dew

tidings | wide

steel | flake

kin | shadow

drown | light

fall | solitaire

crystals | nix

dynamo | eyed

seek | eyes

white | quiet

starry | dove

wet | air

ground | crown

melts on the palm

*A Stone in Water*

A stone  
rises from

juts a  
punctus

in liquid  
surface.

Quick lines  
like eels

trail  
through.

Water softens  
river rock

softens  
space.

And sound  
spills simply

away  
into stone.

*Charms*

Leaves are separate hands  
shadows sleeping high in the air  
rare varietals masked by shade  
flections blurred between  
a dark bouquet

I pluck one  
and touch each tooth  
for its chlorophyll'd edge

Some smooth heart dances  
glories, plums

The singular leaf listens  
with a green softness

What buds  
is already entire.

*Lapis Lazuli Night*

seasoned, scarlet  
and golden alarm

foliage flutters  
between lobe and sinus

leaves wave by the thousands  
in darkness

these flags are toothed  
like the mouth of a dog

the owl woos  
the wind like a moon

making concave  
a lapis lazuli night

*Wending Through*

. . . The wind shakes the arms of the grass

a membranous passing through

meditation of all elements in shift, like sand

a butterfly takes hold of a reed

wind-waves drown out crickets with a rush of trees in warning

then fall away like a shy and tender snake

in the absence of sound

lives the purring tymbal

of mating cicadas . . .

... Tonight the wind an ocean

tree swallows pulling in the riptide

with ropes and

the indigo seafoam

of ringing gongs

A quiet crests the horizon

then the wind bursts in great waves

Rivers of wind wend through all trees,

mesas, mounds

glacial faces

carve all mountain-sides . . .

. . . Wind has a cave's touch

learnt from the dens of wolves

howling the centuries

I am trying to be dog

like the wind

Fish in the river are gentle and still . . .

*Little Flights*

First just a shadow  
made entirely of grass  
made of sun

The shadow  
the grass, both  
simply sun

That what is above  
is also below  
frog prayer  
for green  
for an embryo  
of fungus in thought  
spanning from soil  
to sky

A hummingbird  
buzzes from forty  
feet above you  
nosedives with  
body tucked  
and pointed

Anna and the  
sweetest joust

Innumerable pirouettes  
on the walls shadows of  
trees in the living room  
blue lakes lily pads  
puddle mutely  
and the fan  
hasn't stopped  
spinning for years

Cleaning her room  
I found one spider  
waltzing in a high corner  
radial black orb  
scattering silk  
eyes flexing multitudes  
intergalactic  
optical obsidian

Of morning window silhouettes  
birds fill the light square  
maybe gulls  
sooty, ring-billed, ivory  
little black-headed  
laughing

A child begins  
in light  
counting fingers  
silly distractions  
butterflies cling  
to the grace  
of God

Drinking cowboy grass  
slow raft of a day  
birds arching overhead  
circling mobiles  
above me  
baby to the day

Sometimes I spot her  
my eyes hawked  
on her belly  
white in flight  
feather-belted to the sky

We come as  
one ocean  
of cells webbed

We amount to bacteria  
more than human  
fungi more than plant

We osmose  
into a fusioned wonder  
*like air*

Stood still in the wind trunk  
so blows the  
branches like hair  
(shells and shells  
and shells)  
replace

Upwelling draft grazes  
a finger-ended wingspan  
in a southern meadow

An animal  
makes a noise

My mother in her asana  
    one-legged body  
        turned sideways  
            one hand  
                reaching out  
                    body sock  
a sea horizon

Faithful  
as branches  
may be to their roots  
    past the tips  
        a crown  
            counts buds  
                in a web

I slept standing up  
    a reverie glides a wooden tongue  
        along the inside of my bark  
            smooth, cherry-ribbed roofing  
                by noon, my mouth  
                    is full of seeds

The wind breathes  
in succession  
like a tongue  
sliding slowly across  
tone plates  
of a xylophone  
or like a crack  
that traces a tree  
trunk  
to tip

The body is a mountain  
whose vertex  
a peak to feel for  
without touch or thought  
anatomy loses autonomy to air  
the body is a mountain

Hill  
of starfish  
spined tongue  
buds always  
half-awake  
sucking  
the bottom  
of the sea floor

What covers more ground  
caterpillar trailing  
through the soil  
or the length  
of a single footprint

Holy of geese  
of wing-skimmed cloud  
scattered in nebulous cotton  
in the middle  
of the nighttime  
hundreds honk the horizon

I say a prayer into space

Hail, amber egg  
that blessings  
stream the wind  
salt and birch  
the sand bends  
your soft movement  
six little frozen tracks  
along a path of grass

Seaspray mates the air  
as the wave crests  
the rock  
spindrift white  
sun lures  
light on  
water constellates  
in seconds

The hills melt green  
down into ditches

Alone on a train  
hay bales race by  
and a sun-pillar  
hits the dirt

My walks often begin  
with thoughts  
of a rara avis  
my mother      today her language  
of the rain      today the dark-eyed juncos  
returned from mountains  
signals of a coming cold

A Friday lists

vulture, ant  
beak in a birdbath  
cloud like a face  
squirrel rolling  
in the dirt  
dog breath glowing  
on a hill

The faces

in the wall  
stare  
with stoned-  
over eyes  
water trickles  
down cold cheeks

*as seen in San Clemente, Rome*

4:00 AM chorus  
of coyotes chiming  
layered hymns  
of yips and coos

Sleeping fish have a say  
while the rain thinks in ripples  
orange bodies  
pose in the  
tintinnabulation  
of a stirred surface

I deeply admire  
the maps  
worked by beetles  
in bark  
tracks  
hidden  
codes carved  
the winter peel  
of a tree rind

Rocks smoothed  
by the old  
waterfall

Moss fills  
between  
slits

What do your  
fingers see  
when they touch  
something so wet

Subtle suckle  
the pane  
pours  
over  
gutter  
drip  
leaf  
pitter  
the window  
weeps fat  
drops

Bird out  
in the wet open  
stretches its wings  
the vulture is a seraph  
trying to dry  
in the rain

Goldfinches  
little sun boys  
bopping  
treeward  
the means of wind surf  
black foreheaded flight  
a female blends  
*psveeting*  
little  
olive moon  
in a shady tree

I may sing  
but the birds  
milk this air  
ditties  
spill  
like a  
ragtime  
waterfall  
each day  
they limn  
sound in  
space-time

In a  
fogged valley  
an animal  
moves  
through brush  
a small bird sings  
for miles

Starlings  
move  
the wind  
between  
murmurations of  
atoms  
constellations  
spell out snow  
and thunder  
matter within  
a single  
cell  
even  
the weather  
currents us  
along

The streetlights each have their  
snow storms this night the snowed-  
in brights snow in the lights  
windows going by

*From Nest*

What was contained in

openness  
if not the flood?

What rose

grew

from fog

only to sink  
below

the water?

When the sun

sees her

does she weep  
for the river?

or do her tears simply want

like raindrops

to fall

coalesce

the budding blue?

The flower knows not  
its own face  
but an iris floods  
its reflection  
down into its roots.

A woman lost  
in her weaving  
is as settled  
as a potato  
in the ground.

A bird falls  
softly to sleep.

*seen in Rome, Italy*

when the humming  
stops

loafers  
are stepping  
on the cold tiles

of an old Italian church

a one-eyed  
lamb  
glows  
beneath a  
coin-powered  
light

when the humming  
stops

what will be left in its  
singular vision

when I sleep  
and sit  
in the  
dark

quarterless?

maybe  
a glow fills  
a room with little stars

moon on the iced-  
over lake

the notions of thoughts  
in sleepless nights  
utterances from dark cribs

–was there ever a first day  
when no one was minding  
when wordlessness spoke with worlds?

I've been here for days

have never left      not even once

have fallen in love      with nothing

more times

than I will try to count

I'm by-the-by

and inside-out

Whistle purr

of the red-winged blackbird

*cu -RÊÊÊÊÊ*

*coo-*

Mob of crows  
stalks  
red-tailed hawk  
dive-starts  
down  
on  
grouse

Pursuit follows

pursuit

follows

Titmice in my oak

swollen

little lights land

on a birch branch

white talons cup

the floating rib

Acorns hanging

fall

*Listen:*

wooden-marbles

drip from above

plunking

a tree rain

caps and bottoms

seeding down through.

Driving through  
the golden hours

tipped light from  
the high windows

of the bus becomes  
a honey'd cube.

Butter block 55 mph  
suckle-seated, quiet.

I find myself  
among corn fields

an avid watcher  
of windows.

The day grows

in the space of a second

gives silence up

to momentary birdsong

a mountain blooms

petals bell out

rectrices flicker

white feathers

in a flash

Now, morning

lifts several suns

bees move

aimlessly

hawks ring

infinite centers

a sunray dies, reborn, same

and not

Where the

snow falls

no snow

falls at all

A little bowl

taking in

letting out

A white truck

hums softly

in a mist

A steel kettle

its lid opened

sees its breath

in the cold air

leaves dwindle

fingers

how black          the crow's

heart

Blue and white

at a mountain top

grazing evergreen

a bird floating easy

traces circles in the sky

*Small Bird's Songs*

*How Common a Smile, Blue Butterfly, but You are Dormant in Winter*

Ask what something is  
and that's exactly  
what it is  
not.

As if you belong  
nowhere but are  
incessantly some  
where.

*Tracks*

Rabbit prints in fresh snow

I see them in a field disappearing into white space

Something moves beneath the ground beneath the snow

Always changing

Always the same

Hearken a

bluesy-eyed

soft song

a rain breaks like glass

there is no confusion

born in the year of the hare

My name is Sophie

now of many names

midpoint start end

circumference

undone

Mountain stands

a hand in prayer

order in a split stone

greeting pressed

earth mudra to sky

Alone

I am not  
alone

*On the Limb of a Tree Overhanging a River, a Bird Comes to Rest*

a radiant life is spent on the river  
well-versed in a fluid reflection  
perpetually arriving and  
streaming a course  
through feathers

a pendulum of light

the river glints

the bird is alert

*Turn*

I saw a ruin  
in a sidewalk  
god on the  
stairwell

I saw a king  
in a mountain  
the aura of some  
stray dogs

I saw St. Maria  
in a church  
angels in  
pigeons  
on rafters

I saw blood  
in the basement

I saw red  
as a holy lady  
the grass as  
a relic

I saw the mountain  
as the church  
and some stray dogs  
as death  
itself

I saw the sidewalk  
as King  
I saw the pigeon  
as saint

*I Saw a Tree Standing in the Snow*

but

I

looked

again

and

it

was

just

more

snow

*Morphology*

I am a river of air, blood, water, and bone

    slice me like a log

I am a host of molecular timelines

I am a flowering cell galaxy

I am a microbe sleeping in the sand

    feel around in wet darkness

I am a star of the blooming nucleus

I am a tide of the inward ocean

    count the rolls that ripple

    sift through the units

I am a bacterial barnacle, budded, knocked, adrift

I am an ingrained germ farm

    alphabetize my past lives

    speak their names

    see what levels of life

    answer back

*Shell Collection*

sea-time buried in a shell

on a small stretch of shore

a gull heaves its neck

releases a choking call

hushing *shh* of water

pours into its own geometry

the texture of waves

white foam on a coast

a body is the lifetime of ocean

swimming in its days

*For All We Know*

Flower considers flower  
simply a body of breeze.

Tree considers tree  
simply an arm of wind.

*Kismet*

I am centerless  
a flame  
a falling leaf  
I circle a flower  
the wind stops  
the roots smile  
I am centerless  
I breathe the air  
a field multiplies  
the flower circles  
I fall asleep  
I am centerless  
I breathe a smile  
the wind falls  
a flower multiplies  
I light a leaf  
the flame divides  
I am centerless

*Ashes to Dust*

If my words be lost  
plant me a star.

Call me with  
no voice, pishing.

Come constellating Carolina –  
air, wren, and Bosnian Pine.

Dance between form  
and shadow, tracing  
space in boundless flight.

If my last words be as lost as my first  
let light face me.

Let me match the flame  
struck through the bird's eye –  
a solitary sun.

*Aum*

Open sleep  
falls into dream

a subtle ceiling –

cymatic quiver

*Head Song*

God orbits the chest  
climbing to the cranial ceiling.  
Aum is a vibratory muscle  
skull a humming clam.  
An opal pearl rests  
in the groove of the tongue.  
Where sound expands  
a sightless headsong –  
hemispheres divide.  
An earthquake rumbles  
beneath the sagittal suture.  
The throat is the horn of plenty  
overflowing with flowers.

*Breath Meditation*

If the moment is left to realize this in-breath

/ /

And this out-breath passing through the door and into the fresh air

/ /

If you take your shoes off, and you stay for a while

/ /

/ /

This sonance of a lonesome fowl

/ /

/ /

Is a tree with strong roots bending in the wind

/ /

/ /

/ /

/ /

For now when I die  
say I was a dove covered in snow  
say I was immaculate, was the cliff  
say I was Gloria  
and spent my days  
in the river below

For now when I die  
ask  
was I fire  
was I birthless and formless?

Say I was dreamt in dogma  
outside in the morning  
say I was the light of cold breath

For now when I die  
ask was I just waking up?

No, say I was always  
simply sleeping  
say I became that lake  
water through and through  
say I was the the river  
was the fish  
moving slow under ice  
say for miles I was sleek as darkness

Say when I finally fell  
I was snow  
I lined the spring buds and  
the boughs of trees

For now when I die  
say I melted and returned  
in next week's rain.