Spring 2021

A small bird sings for miles

Sophie M. Gregory
Bard College, sophiegregory646@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj_s2021

Part of the Poetry Commons

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License.

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj_s2021/191

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects at Bard Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senior Projects Spring 2021 by an authorized administrator of Bard Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@bard.edu.
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
TABLE OF CONTENTS:

**Dawn Chorus**
- Snowlight ................................................................. 4
- Phosphenes ............................................................... 5
- Hypnagogia ............................................................... 6
- Bluejay Rally ............................................................. 7
- Spring Blink ............................................................... 8
- Daylilies .................................................................. 9
- Homeland ................................................................ 10
- Prayer ..................................................................... 11
- You Sow the Field...................................................... 12
- Osprey and Son ......................................................... 13
- My Father and His Dog ............................................. 14

**Light Shadows**
- She Said With Such Wonder... ..................................... 16
- Let Me Grow Grey and Wise ....................................... 17
- A Day Before Becoming Full ...................................... 18
- To the Last Day and All Her Life ................................ 19
- As if Empty ................................................................ 20
- Stink Bug Finis .......................................................... 21
- “The balancing act of birdflight--” ............................. 22
- The Names of God ..................................................... 23
- Blood Underwater Is Smoke in the Air ....................... 25
- Striking a Match ........................................................ 26
- What is the Opposite of My Shadow ......................... 27
- Motion Dazzle ............................................................ 28
- Napp ....................................................................... 29
**Weathered Way**
Cat Rain ................................................. 31
Rain ..................................................... 32
Soft Staccato, Sprinkle .................................. 33
Sanskrit for ‘He Gets Wet ’ ............................ 34
Foot Fall ................................................ 35
Snaw .................................................... 36
A Stone in Water ........................................ 37
Charms ............................................... 38
Lapis Lazuli Night ....................................... 39
Wending Through ..................................... 40

**Little Flights** ............................................. 43

**From Nest** ............................................... 57

**Small Bird’s Songs**
How Common a Smile... ............................... 74
Tracks .................................................... 75
“Hearken—” ........................................... 76
“My name is Sophie—” ................................ 77
“Mountain stands—” ................................ 78
“Alone—” ............................................ 79
On the Limb of a Tree... ............................... 80
Turn ..................................................... 81
I Saw a Tree Standing in the Snow ................... 82
Morphology ............................................ 83
Shell Collection ....................................... 84
For All We Know ...................................... 85
Kismet .................................................. 86
Ashes to Dust .......................................... 87
Aum .................................................... 88
Head Song ............................................. 89
Breath Meditation .................................... 90
“For now when I die—” .............................. 91
Dawn Chorus
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.
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

dailand
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
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
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
eyears ago
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
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.
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>absence</th>
<th>caldera</th>
<th>yellow</th>
<th>noontime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>boomerang</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plurality</td>
<td>subtraction</td>
<td>darkness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWOL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWOL</td>
<td>black hole</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>theoretical mass</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parrot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>color</td>
<td>standstill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sun ray</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>water</td>
<td></td>
<td>glint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>static</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.
Snow

(Old English for snow)

harbinger | clean
slowly | forest
down | sunless
numbed | helix
subdues | dew
tiding | 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.
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
*psweeting*
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 –RÉÉÉÉÉÉ

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
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
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
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
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.
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.
Open sleep
falls into dream

a subtle ceiling –

cymatic quiver
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 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.