

**two**

## **THE INNER LIFE**

Deer move through it, of course.  
And every evening I cook dinner.  
Without help, night comes to town.  
Sometimes someone says something extraordinary.  
The old pain and the current wonder exist.  
Which art moment was it that changed everything?  
And have you noticed: dog fur is one soft; cat, another.  
My loveliness has taken some getting used to.  
I stand to the side.  
Very gently, I tell myself to sleep.

## IN A PUBLIC SPACE

There's heat coming off your body, a few inches from mine.  
One or the other of us shifts and I lose you for a minute.

Separate conversations seem to occupy our attention.  
Later you'll say that's not unusual. Later still: what I missed:

whitecaps on the river; it's that windy. Moment to moment,  
much of the inexpressible between us also gets worked out

as when, ever watchful, you leaned close to let me know  
I was still wearing my apron as the guests arrived.

## INTIMACY

Forget long ago, I tell myself on a terrace above the valley,  
my house just fine on another hill.  
And you, on another rooftop in a photo you send.  
When the power goes out, overnight, I wake,  
lost for the first time in a long time.  
Come morning, the bird that sounds like a roller coaster is back.  
And the one with ever more nest.  
I narrate so you'll see what I see, and not what I fear.  
Once you made a note in the margin: Keats, translated.  
There comes a point when hypothetical questions cease;  
sometimes I know what you like.  
In the dark, it takes just a moment for our eyes to adjust.

## THINKING OF LITTLE ELSE

Then, finally, some sun across my desk.  
Another reason my go-to example is mercy.  
A wind comes through and—have you noticed?—  
dogwood blossoms tremble on their little shelves.  
What is private in nature?  
I'm thinking again of the rabbit not hidden in the grass.  
Some people have to contain multitudes.  
*Has it started? Is this it?* I often wonder.  
Suffering is an interesting concept.  
My business is to trust when the time comes.

## DISCRETELY

The nature of God is love, a boy said.  
I was just walking along in this story;  
some *alive* is exquisite on a Tuesday.  
The wisteria, too, is back, full force.  
My fundamental mistake has been distance.  
*I'm right here—*: morning and afternoon.

So beauty isn't passive, after all.  
Like the rain that lingers among the trees.  
Or the dollhouse opened toward a window.  
What do you look like, listening alone?  
Every green is a green I want to touch.  
My love could not be otherwise.

## NEARBY

Children's voices rise over the hill at dusk,  
and a particular moon everyone is waiting for.  
A little later, I watch you, inside, turn a page slowly.  
The same soft light that surrounds you fills me.  
*How about if we say ready when we're ready?*,  
one serious child had suggested to another.  
Imagining into any opening is a kind of fame;  
providing the space, also, reveals itself in time.

## WHOSE YESTERDAY

The morning neighborhood smells of campfires:  
leftover dream energy.  
The natural world too is contractual:  
the willow and the drought; the moment-to-moment sky.  
Sometimes I'm left wondering just how  
thought translates into action.  
This is the present tense, where we live and move;  
*otherwise* isn't nearly so powerful.  
Still, out of longing, I make a fist to see the mechanism.  
Then, educated, I keep my beauty open.