

Fuel

Monday, I felt the touch
of death lifted. There was too much
wood left over in the woodpile
to be worried about the last frosts,
about the cold month of May,
the days just stained with green.

There were new leaves everywhere.
There was fuel enough for every bit
of life, it seemed.

I put my bare toes into the dusty soil,
and when I leaned over to wipe them,
the blood was swimming in my veins,
and I could see the world from
between my knees: it was alive,
leafy, trembling, turning green.

Goodness in the World

The egg cracks open to see
mid-day: so much light pours in
that one is almost blinded.
And perhaps it would be better
to be blind at that single moment
when there are angelic voices all around,
and when the voices become
her mother's first sigh, her father's
first response. The room darkens.
Another child has been born,
and what changes will settle
happen again, as before.

Everyone Can Learn Something

Tadpole quivers under algae,
the pond breathes, I've got
a breath of water stuck in my throat;
the reeds hold turgor but still bend
to the wind. When I clear the way
for air, the tadpole has disappeared,
the reeds stand still. Who is there
holding witness to our breath?
Now that I am looking at the surface
of the pond, I see my reflection,
hair dark, my body a bright, light object.
It is only me and no one else
who sees that I am breathing again,
who sees the tadpole underwater come
close again when things are quiet.

Territory

On the bridge of my finger,
the ant crawls, doesn't stop when I place it
down on the ground. From the grass,
one comes across the plain skin
of my leg and doesn't stop, follows its
way over. I am the territory of a country
that is so easily traversed. I am soaked
in familiar smells, enough to keep an ant
at ease in its pace. I wear grass stains
on my knees and pine needles stuck here
in my hair, and there is a similar language
we have—dirt, grass, leaves—between
our separate bodies, small and large.

This Cradle Is Rocking

This cradle will keep rocking
us back and forth, in the foamy
waves, in the salty tides,
and in the chilly water,
I am as much a child as my
child swimming alongside
me. The cradle rocks,
waves lift us, we reach the sandbar
further from shore and rise up
from the depths. We are
light on our feet, we run
in the shallows, we are the top
part of waves, the surf,
and look, a gull has freed itself
from a cloudbank and come to
tell us the news, but it is as if
we are just recently born,
we are too new to listen:
we submerge, let the sea
rock us, bring us to shore.

Rooster

He is inside the coop,
keeping his call inside himself.
The door opens, and the rust of his voice
speaks just enough to follow
the hens out to eat. The cold morning
has no repeated crow to listen to,
the air hurts the ear that is uncovered
to hear what might be called but
isn't coming. He is placid, quieted
further by the strong wind
that picks up by mid-day,
and before the sun—in its weaker form—
has gone, he's on his roost.
The sound then is just the hearts
of all those birds together keeping
them alive while the cold settles in.