

## *Table of Contents*

### YOU THIS CLOSE

Prologue 15

Even mine, as I unlace my jesses, 17

At first, only awe. Now I see a little 18

I saw you yesterday 19

I am a clearing; you are my deer 20

On this cool night, I want to slip in 21

Without haste, toward eternity 22

I'll wave back 23

Forget me? Not 24

I am an old river 25

Arrive, my rival— 26

This temptress evening brings me 27

By a margin of clouds 28

By ravel in the wild rain, 29

The sun was declining at just such an angle 30

Always one will dance, 31

Included in all this are lessons 32

Unbar my love, Callisto, 33

*Desire* 34

As if floating down this river 36

Almost everything followed me there 37

As I unlace for you 38

Let the entrance be 39

My question was irrelevant— 40

Listen, the chickadee's singing its spring song 41

Bright and cheerful, deeply 42  
Out of darkness, Love, wells a rivulet 43  
Like a kid 44  
My vision of you sighs, 45  
To the reeds and lilies 46  
Stabbing today's delicious fish 47  
With you, I will be as easy 50  
Listen, watch, for some third thing 52  
We will have mornings that break sound 53  
Something must be said now, 55  
All my precipitations, 56  
Half-full and rising, the moon a heron 57  
The label on my brother's hat 58  
Why yearn, even for you? When 59  
I took my solitude on the river 60  
I woke dreaming 61  
Today, Hon, it was perfectly hot, so close 62  
In the temple of the wild river 63  
  
Coda 64

#### WILD HUSH

Bitter 69  
The Students Who Come to Me with Writing Anxiety 70  
Big Top 72  
Hot Yoga 73  
Vernal Equinox 75  
Zebra 76  
POP 77  
The Birds Are Gone 78  
Three-day Wind 80

Loneliness	81
I Swim a Sea That Has No Shore or Bottom	82
What Remains	83
The Rosebud Garden of Girls	84
When I Was a Boy	85
Night Blooming	86
The Cow in the Dutch Museum	89
Site Specific: Human and Animal Forms	88
This Last Day of July	89

*Acknowledgments*

*Notes*

*About the Author*

*About the Artist*

*About the St Croix Watershed Research Station*

## *Prologue*

The most remotely erotic thing to occur  
Remotely connected to me since I was  
Seventeen and dip-kissed over a candle  
Until my hair caught fire happened tonight  
When my little black poodle whipped  
My black bra about the apartment with  
Such naughty ebullience that she threw up.

As I dabbed with paper towels at the bilious  
Remains of my dog's dinner spritzed with  
Bio-active stain and odor remover, I thought  
It is time to break up with loneliness.

I wanted a life with someone,  
Loneliness kept following me, so a life with  
Loneliness then. I might not have thrived without  
Loneliness, might not have seized on the sight of

Pelicans surfing a curl of air, ecstasy of glyphs,  
None of that flocking purpose for me, I don't pretend to  
Believe any bird made emblem for ease has it easy,  
Only that none of them has decided badly,  
None so encumbered. If anything I've learned that to make  
Something with nothing is a debacle, is to become  
Sick with stars. The river ice is breaking elsewhere.

Geese arrived at sunset at frantic speeds, blown in,  
A good run but hard braking. All day I invented a way  
To go back in time five minutes, for when you've gone

Wrong, know it immediately, need to do over,  
Or when you walked right past your beloved whom you've  
Not yet met. We so easily lose that much.  
Think how haltingly we get.

Right there and we don't see it. The river.  
The river! Beloved, what if you've been there all this time?

Even mine, as I unlace my jesses,

Is that wild lure  
In the way the eagle,  
Caught by the creance,  
Turned away  
From the only one who could help  
And—unerring, swift—  
Was hung upside down.  
In the way the eagle,  
Just hanging there  
Despite talon, beak—  
Without flight, and so without identity—  
Answered yes to all.  
Trusting—through the line—the lure  
Wild, flight  
From loss to reach,  
Only ah

At first, only awe. Now I see a little.

Yesterday, a turkey yanking a perch  
From the river, a flicker in ground needles  
Rustling ants, swallows slipping from bluff to bank.  
I followed a fish by its wake. I imagined  
Everything as your harbingers, come  
To compose harbor in me.

Matisse said, there are always flowers for those  
Who want to see them. Like a schoolgirl, I saw  
Hearts everywhere—in petals, of course, and leaves,  
The shapes of rocks and bark bits, designs in moss,  
And the contours of joined trees. Among the trees,  
In dusk, it may have been a deer breathing,  
Or, I saw you yesterday.

I saw you yesterday

when the checkout guy asked,  
“Did you find everything okay?” and I said, “Yes—

It’s all about managing your expectations, right?”  
And he laughed with me, then fell silent,  
Passed several more items over the scanner.  
To himself, he said, “That’s really big.”

It was your delight and your thoughtfulness I saw  
That made me believe for an evening what you do  
Always believe, that we are here for all of us  
Never know who will say the thing we need to hear, or how

We might be a light for another, even if a firefly.  
The fireflies in the forest are even more unpredictable  
Than those in the fields and ditches—you can’t  
Try to see them. That made me think of you, too,

How I have been trying to see you, and also  
Not trying, in case that was better. Yet, you appear  
Only in flashes in others. Beloved,  
I am a clearing. You are my deer.