

getting golden
the notebook of flames

julia doughty

in gratitude to: mamma, trees & earth, shree maa & swami satyananda, sri swami satchidananda, amma, pema chödrön, jack kornfield, jane & richard, ann & jerry, zanne, sharman, sharon, kate, canéla, jessika, susan, hollis, mel, all my teachers & friends & the ones involved in *ensemble*.

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she had been one to have her pregnant patients walk & breathe & now, she's under too much stress, all piled up, so she'll arrive in time for the last hour of delivery, cesarean, or forceps

and tired in a thirty-six hour shift, sure, she'll say the wrong medicine & the nurse's question will catch her

it's always been long hours for doctors and nurses
they'll be doing good if it gets cut down to an eighty hour week

they're not saying we'll go to war
they're saying they're just
preparing for the possible
immediate event of

one student gives her report of a living
writer, gabriel garcia marquez,
he barely made it through alive
among the fighting factions of colombia
he kept on writing out of compulsion
had some work as a journalist
his creative work came out
in spurts & was not well read
until his grandmother's
way of slipping in
story and warning in the everyday
life with no marker in her
face showing that we'd be
taking a side route
that he got when he was
driving one day & no stopping
the driven pen then
on six packs of cigarettes
a day for a year
til the big hundred
years of solitude had
its full birthing

not the first writer to go into debt
 to be humbled more times
 than we can count

in the gnashing winds
 she was walking her dog
 she was done making her books
 of how to study for the s.a.t.
 the g.r.e. was working on her next
 was walking the dog and the eucalyptus
 snapped & struck her dead

& the north county flower houses
 frail framed wood & plastic
 flattened & scattered snow
 chips of light fractions of plastic

one two maybe three bees going in
 or out the stump hole
 after mighty wind, rain & cold
 the brightest, tenderest oak leaves
 i've ever seen on one branch
 white & rosy mushrooms upturning soft earth
 all the fresh sages
 sweet & strong
 broken willow branches in scatterings
 all dry leaves of the fall tamped down
 the mountain trail dustless & granite
 underlinings exposed
 rain smoothed
 buckwheat's mostly storm swept
 of its flowers

the wise teacher says
 your body changes
 every 12 years—
 the only thing that doesn't is your you
 when you stop wanting needing
 & just go with the changes
 of feeling thinking
 & stop thinking of you as you
 then you are one with you

they can smell where there
 might be a find
 in the receding polar ice
 they're walking & it gets rank
 that's ancient caribou dung
 coming undone by bacteria
 at long last getting at it
 and digging in
 there's yellow, something
 it's the rim
 the rim of a basket
 someone left from their
 berry picking yesterday
 four thousand years yesterday

neeka the shepherd
 has to bark ferociously
 when we get to the house but
 within minutes is licking my face
 turning belly up for strokes
 lewis the cat comes over
 to take a sniff & then
 slips off
 light lingers
 and we get grapefruit-sized
 lemons from the backyard's tree
 winter avocados aren't quite
 ready & are all streaked
 with bare patches
 warm weather avos
 are just starting a finger-sized
 beginning

*

you start by watching the mind

the mistress of steam
in the bath in russia
will pummel you with birch branches
if you'd like

*

three russian toddlers
widen their feet
in a soldier's stance & clasp
their hands behind them
& the nurse, like them,
in sunglasses, turns on the uv
lamp for their daily
three minute dose
that helps their bones grow

i have crisscrossed the streets that were in the poorest parts of the southland's cities, and
i have searched the quiet grids of houses to find among them a rental where i could, like
my three potted green plants, keep on

and i have arrived into my own home by the luck of the cracks of good percentage
finance,
a passed-on grandmother, and the sharing of yet once more generous mother love

to stay in one place for this long has begun to settle some labyrinthine plans that were to
take me through more neighborhoods and thoreau-ponded years

that clouds of financial uncertainty still hover above the roof, this roof called, truly,
"mine," has less rattling effect

one could trace it to the stability of the same walls.
somehow, there is enough

now i know less than i ever did. questions are the bat inhabitants of my mind's attic. yet
there is this floor, the same one that i return to each morning, each evening, where i sit
and attempt to give away, as best i can, all that is mine

singing without nightclub or church choir loft

a voice lifting into its peculiar sky

a sky of moving, great & strange clouds

you don't miss it now, do you, that you didn't go to the prom, mamma asks

there are no formulas for success

now someone up ahead is answering

her ringing phone

she's mad, that's for sure,

saying he knew perfectly well

that her friend wasn't straight

so why make the stupid insulting joke,

she's getting out of earshot, quicker steps

the clouds were combed fleece

last night dyed orange

not at all weathervaned for rain

it's hard to predict the days

by morning only the wet ground

was the message left,

the messenger, a quiet rain,

long gone

down at the river three guys saying

in a strange way

it's a beautiful day for a hike—

as if they'd just robbed a bank,

all honesty has its rewards

and to just lay it all out

whether you're even feeling

at that moment

what you were before, is probably

not so essential

no, honesty can be

of a different kind—

the scowl on your friend's face

hers to have

*

one sentence stumbled forth
& others followed

the child cried all afternoon, tearless
i asked her if she was a poet
but she only kept on—and squirmed
& would take a break once in awhile
to inhale a long breath & then let loose
the further angst of the ages of her lifetimes

to stand in the kitchen corner
crying over a past moment
is to watch a pot
that is already long dry

long times of going into
the blankness of a page

some nights we slept
under the sky
without roof or cookstove

deerhooved impressions
under our backs

wouldn't it be a new day
if you gave all
just like the single pot
that never went empty

and the battle dirges
and ship rumbles
did not disturb you

like you were already
om the infinite beyond conception

wouldn't it

there was a whole block of apartments
 lining the busy road
 a man half way
 into the street
 and cars passing found
 a black cat there near the center

there was a taxi cab & two men
 at the back passenger door
 feet appearing of another
 the men grunted, lifting

then one bent down, pulling
 a skirt down
 they lifted again
 an ancient woman appeared
 out of the way of the door
 they set her into a chair
 & lifted the chair
 walking, they walked to the house

so why wait why look for what you
 think you want

didn't the years pass on

a mortero hollowed into the
 big creekside boulder

bees partaking of the nectar of jojoba blossoms

picking up
 dried bay leaves from the ground sorting out
 the ones less sugared with once wet now dried dirt
 using left hand & right hand is this how
 it once was no hand dominating the way things
 are done

must be a river finding its own way
 with the help of obstructions

continual banks and boulders

raptors & crows dominating
because they can withstand
the gummy difficulties of eucalyptus

old dog lumbering out
to lie in the sun

the beach sand a gold brocade
i find one small, perfect sand dollar

we get just past a red painted post and a young man in full camouflage fatigues—which makes him a sign post himself on the barren beachscape—walks towards us & says do we have military i.d. & if not don't go any further, & zanne, who's just been complaining about the sub she had for her grad ed tech class, that he was a marine & giving, for his examples, all military scenarios that rubbed her pacifism raw—she gets cranky with this guy, asks why, since when, she's an american citizen with an i.d., & he says since nine one one & the tightened security against terrorism, & she says but we're not terrorists & i'm walking away laughing & he's mixed, not knowing if to be defensive or friendly, he's young, he's doing his job, i laugh & say you got a good job today hanging out on the beach, yeah, he says, if it doesn't rain

and we head back & look out toward matiway/black rock/point loma,
it really is black & the sky from here to there is a bumpy buckled rooftop of grey

pictures of maria kodma with blind borges
they're going up in the hot air balloon
he's the one with a fun smile
she's got the uncertainty of seeing

the triple fires of misery:
adhyatmika—from the body
adhibhautika—from the elements
adhidaivika—from divine forces

ladyfinger dudleyas in boulder cracks
decomposed leaf lace

monarch butterflies have appeared in mexico in their former full number. their resting ground & turnaround migrator spot had been severely altered by a winter storm last year, and they made scarce appearances in the u.s. & canada. now they are an “endangered phenomenon;” scientists can’t say how it’s come to be

she had seen her husband
and seven children killed
by the rebels in rwanda
she had been kept for a month
by that militia, raped repeatedly

and then the massacre
of 800,000—or more—was over

she found herself pregnant

women had not been the ones
to climb up to repair
the roof, to work for a wage,
to read

they were to stay at home
and have children

now she, along with the other women,
75% of the survivors of the holocaust,
was working

and she decided to have
the baby, give new life

she named her “god’s gift”
after she saw how easily
the baby smiled

i got to know the comma by helping students of english
who had fled from cambodia, viet nam, thailand

this is where you join two thoughts together

this is where you can not
join two thoughts together
unless you add one of these words
to connect them

they sat very close to me
and their breaths smelled strongly
of garlic, fish, onion

*

once in awhile i see someone
still living on the streets
who i once handed
hot stew to twenty years ago

*

almost a snake skin, a bit of
decayed bark

*

the student last night said
i've never really found out what
the definition of normal means—
i read right to
left, it's just normal for me
that way

*

he did his job
dropped the bombs on the iraqis
without seeing
who they bombed
his wing men didn't see him
his plane was gone
he ejected
all they saw was the parachute
left on the ground

he spent a month under ground
 held and tortured
 didn't tell tho a gun
 was held to his head
 the usual
 he says
 his wife probably doesn't agree
 but now ten years later
 he's at the edge
 waiting to be given orders
 to go into combat again
 for peace
 he doesn't think about the past
 no use dwelling on it

*

if only we could recognize
 the face of each other
 the likenesses

what would i expect from you
 what would i want changed

he said all those black
 bags on the air field were
 stacked like cord wood
 (30 years ago) and he knew
 this was what war is
 lives bagged up

they'd hoped that baghdad
 would be saved
 but we're hearing numbers
 we don't know really
 something maybe 250 or more
 people in their hometown
 just trying to go on living
 their lives
 tomahawked

*

how we are one in a mighty wind of forgetting
 pushing on the wind
 for survival

touching fingers to fingers

the body coming apart

the two-year-old running just enough
 ahead, mouth open and
 the father with the same
 half blank half worried look
 trying to catch up
 the child looking back over its shoulder
 but charging down the trail

crows flying from my mouth
 out to the big sky

no telling where to no telling
 what time

sand in the boots
 looking for eggs that would never
 be found

eating the poems, there

scorpion scratching its way up

listening, hair all loose,
 washed by desert wind rumbled
 under the tail winds

for every bit of salt
 another breath

for all the long while updrafts
 set off without distance
 to cover place to place

placements of tracks

a stop of a wash
no water there

pause updraft to spring
long drink

for laughter
and then off

a rear guide tail

sweeps of hill lines
boulder shoulders

phantasms pink twilights
bristled bright night sky

wind gusting around the desert floor here

the strongest winds the americans have ever known there

thirty dead from a bomb
in the city of baghdad

and a guy runs up waving
a hand, a hand that
was only just moments before
of a living being, he waves it
saying, is this what you call liberation?

they're saying in the common person's language
we can take care of our own problems
this is invasion
or they're not saying anything
and walking away

this is the story backdropping
my childhood

running men & smoke
jumpy sounds of guns & bombs

students in a simulated war project
say yeah, of course,
what do you expect?
images of war *are* gross—

the professor says there's
point of view, why here on tv you'll see
an american flag waving
in the background
why there you'll see a strong
iraqi military force
prevailing in the dust storms

it's not an international crime
to destroy your own infrastructure
as a defense tactic

rain! rain! rain!
we've never had rain this season!

*it's you, you americans
bringing this down upon us
this yellow dust*

*

we would have found ourselves touching
the war some way or another

i would attempt to change you
to more of my liking
and you would remain, as always,
yourself

we were looking to clone before
there was ever such a thing as cloning

sitting at the edge of the pond
to get a glimpse of the self
and falling in

wind last night rocking the car
taking hold & shaking it

and stepping out to see the city's forgotten stars

planted at every step some green
some flower in the desert

just a cool breeze now a white streaked sky
the sometimes buzz of bugs
and the big silence

*

you should write & do your practice
and find some work that will
allow you to survive, the wise teacher said

*

beserk, according to the ancient
vikings, meant one who has gone
beyond the protocols of war,
who will be particularly
destructive & gruesome

*

a large caterpillar with
a thorned tail devours a flower stalk

is it legal to send a cluster
bomb into an area, a caller asks,
because it doesn't hit
just one thing?—yes, according
to international law, it is, it's still
a targeted area

isn't bush, according to the law
that says the head of command
can be assassinated, a candidate
to be killed? yes,
and the white house can
be hit, the pentagon, many
places

coming down the mountain—
two crows clucking in the sycamore

yellow mustard daisy white lupine

doves in the desert

lights out in order to make it
more difficult to strike
but the water pump's off
so no one knows where
the water will come from
bananas just yesterday from somalia
bought in the market

breathe the free air and kiss the baby
the birds quiet but the baby's crying

trying to find your passport?
the airport's been bombed

stung into a painful living now

if there were no rulers to support—

there will be more & more
suicide bombings, they say

*—i'm from the peace institute,
she says, and we're interested
in dialogue, in building bridges*

*—we're here to support the troops,
i'm here to support my son-in-law
and the troops & i'm, we're
not interested in dialogue*

the young man was told
he would not be able to make that good
of a shot in real war
and that was when
he realized he couldn't do it,
good shot or not
he went away & then came back
to pendleton the other day,
filing as a c.o.
and as a gay man

the reporters who aren't embedded
must travel great distances
to track the events of the war

*i'm covering two different
areas, confusing, like working
two wars at the same time*

*sleeping on a local's floor
at night talking to the few other
fellow traveling reporters & photographers
checking the story
reading what we can
of the place & people
from the books we've brought*

*right now needing a good hotel
some few days to check in
and get clean*

*we're driving around here
on gas that's gone up almost 100%*

and here in san diego we're still driving
out to see desert flowers
on the weekend

they found a box of glass vials
that had components for making diseases
the vials stopped up with socks

the bombed terrorist camp
being sorted through
scraps of documents blowing in the wind
saying, we will destroy
the zionist crusade

the vials being handled by a local
the cia not yet arrived

having no idea if they were
safe or not so keeping
a six foot distance

making up our world

little trails that whiten through the dunes

*

you will need to empty out everything
to live in this moment right now, she says

the christian peacekeeper went
to witness & to bring back
the voice of the voiceless
in the speeding exiting car
on the vast stretch of six lane
highway across the desert
they hit a bit of shrapnel
tire blew
the car careened into
a rugged ditch & flipped
his ribs broke, his back fractured

he would be dead but for his seat belt
 the others landed on top of him
 they all lived & got out

if they hadn't stopped there
 been pulled by locals
 to their small village
 he wouldn't have known
 about the children's hospital
 the children who are dying

ann says her economic analyst neighbor says this is the worst time
 she's ever seen, there's nothing to support the dollar. the only thing that might save it is
 getting hold of that oil

the rulers' house of cards
 set up, taken down

here the supreme court is deciding
 for or against affirmative action
 and anti-sodomy laws

what's a family
 what's a critical mass
 of a minority

a nineteen-year-old american died in bed in iraq
 when his gun went off
 hitting him in the chest

*

and the gulf lost coral reefs to the spills. when the coral reefs go, so do all the fish &
 shellfish

tarcrete, the doctor says, is what remains of the gulf war oil spills; a one foot thick,
 hardened oil mass. a few thinner places have plants coming through. if the massive job of
 removing the tarcrete happens, not now but after the war, they will have to put down
 pebbles, return it to its natural balance

if pebbles don't cover the surface, sand blows everywhere, makes people ill, gets into
 their lungs, may even create cancer, collects into dunes that cover roads & bridges

wind naturally wants to run a flat course: when it hits dunes,
 it rises up into fits of storms

now the heavy traffic of foot soldiers & their vehicles over the desert floor is scraping off
the stones that would protect them

*

the generals roll their eyes
when asked if they'd had enough troops
to come into the battle
the first three days, heck, the first week,
they don't dare say no

*

the wise teacher says
others will also say to you
let go of your things
your bank account your checkbook
but you won't listen
you consider your possessions
and your body you
and consider that to be your
happiness

*

the word i was looking for yesterday
is landmines
today they say people come
back home as soon as possible
the village looks pretty much intact
and they're not thinking
of the years to come
of watching their every step

*

isn't this war sounding like
what we grew up with?

they all do, she says

*

we'd run out of apple pie
 and offered apple crisp instead
 in the kitchen, the gulf war played on tv
 i was waitressing in the mountain cafe
 the cook was cheering, saying nuke em
 and young mexican men were being pulled
 into side alleys
 and beaten—
 as if they could stand
 as substitutes for
 iraqis

*

her face passed by
 when not in the slick magazine
 as a star as a model
 her face dusted with desert sand
 her lips grim, the badge of her duty
 they had no idea where she'd gone
 he was visiting his wife in the hospital
 and the security was beating
 the american woman
 so he walked six miles
 out of town to find the marines
 to tell them
 he went back
 he was in the hospital
 two more times and saw her
 her legs broken and one arm
 before the marines came
 three days after he'd told them
 where she was

*

for awhile a bird sings
 the song of hope outside
 the wind rattled window

*i believe, for some odd reason
 what we're taught—
 even if the other is breaking
 every one of the rules,
 you don't shoot without
 the right reason
 it is better, she tells us,
 to die with your honor
 than to die having done
 the worst, having become
 just as unconscious as the other*

*

if all that you say is true,
 arjuna says, show yourself
 to me

and krishna does
 a brilliantly dazzling being

in order to continue to
 talk with arjuna, persuade him
 to be the kind of warrior
 who isn't greedy for pleasure
 caught in the identity of pain
 to be fearless in this
 earthly battleground

*

gravel scraped and air raids
 lights out counting on no water

walking through walls of beliefs

one hardened face and a sure shot

back when there was a plan

back when a pregnant woman
 jumping out of a car
 was just that

not a suicide for her
a death for you

planting the seeds of destruction
with this news

your son going into the basement
to bang hard on his drums

up in an airplane and
plugged in by internet

all these ways to talk
to each other

and your car because you
were talking on your cell
crashing into mine

*reality movie? you know,
where they go, like, to mexico
& party & film the whole
thing? the first time i made
a thousand, the second
time i'll make 2, the third
5, and the fourth 50 thou*

all you've ever wanted to be
a star acting

singing into a dream
another life maybe

doesn't this war sound like
the one we grew up with

and this is how the body breaks open
and bones become doves
small doves released
like from a sea's sand dollar

april-october

she must not sneak off
to upchuck her wedding cake
and she must not act as if
her body is that of a photo's

*

must let go of being a genius at midlife

a flight attendant says after 9/11 she couldn't think about it, she just went to work, the red eye to new york. she likes it, it gives her a twenty-four hours away from her three girls. the first few times after 9/11 the same guy always sat next to her and would promptly fall asleep, and she worried until she finally decided to let it go, stop wondering. she says you can't tell if the person's mexican or middle eastern or whatever. the pilots tell her that you just can't imagine, really, how much the wings can bend.

and she's been doing this work almost 25 years & she still doesn't like turbulence & turbulence is worse now—great hurricanes, hotter heat, colder cold

wind is cool and picks through
the leaves like a fall bird

*

what they tell me i should
know is so much different
than what i know

lichen on the deepest
inside limbs

bigger branches
speckled with bird bitten holes

*

the wise teacher says
yes, as a donkey—
if you need rest, take it,
do what you do

as you are able
 no need to talk
 and repeat things if you're
 not a parrot
 no need to parrot
 a parrot if you're
 a donkey

*

there's blooms in the front yard dropping off that had been so painterly in the cool
 dampness of june's fog and light rains

we have abruptly, this last week, bumped right over into summer heat

sun perches atop the sky
 casts the horizon into deep blue

cicadas in warmth
 pour out & pull back their tidal song

hill grasses no longer exude their
 wild perfumes, stand as wind polished golds

now the sun is full and must not
 be looked at

sun in its zenith not the end
 its very middle round & fat hotness

superlative & superb
 its most its greatest

the desert conjured

all the while all the minutes

to be a fish in the eddy, stunned, slowed

sitting in high sun shade

then they have bombed a house
 and hussein's brothers have died
 and there is more wreckage
 and less plans & more
 accusations of who lied
 who's terrorizing

the woman who lives in a slow
 world, a poetic field
 a four directions, all encompassing field,
 of beauty of embraced ugliness

*

as usual in a diary, one works backwards
 breakage all in all of the mess of what was

sprawling into the feminine
 expressions, gestures, forms
 les jours des femmes
 yin & ida, cherished, chéri, friends

the moonscaped bomb scraped
 iraq was once where
 the star gazers were

we find our place in the lost places

*

can we, my teacher once said,
 fall in love with at least
 the shoes of the one
 we instantly do not like?

...the Supreme Court bought into the idea of weeding out the unfit in its 8-1 *Buck v. Bell* decision of 1927, which upheld a Virginia law allowing the sterilization of individuals thought to be genetically defective.

The court did not reverse its decision until 1972, after the sterilization of more than 65,000 people nationwide. Even then, U.S. policymakers continued to promote the

practice through population control programs in India, China, and many other countries, as well as in some U.S. territories...these policies led to the sterilization of one of every three women—all of them American citizens—in Puerto Rico. (Reardon)

mamma's in the red open convertible
 waving as they go down el cajon boulevard
 her big story lengthened
 into all these years
 showing up in a picture
 homecoming
 tho she never left
 queen tho the height of that day
 wasn't a throne she could move with her
 she couldn't see how
 the waist she'd made that
 a man's hands could encircle
 a gown so much like all
 those gorgeous pictures
 would have so little staying power
 the swelling with babies
 another scepter
 beauties, little fingers, easy adoring smiles
 that had their fee
 the wages of working a marriage
 without love

Wisdom sits in places. It's like water that never dries up. You need to drink water to stay alive, don't you? Well, you also need to drink from places. You must remember everything about them. You must learn their names. You must remember what happened at them long ago. You must think about it and keep on thinking about it. Then your mind will become smoother and smoother. Then you will see danger before it happens. You will walk a long way and live a long time. You will be wise. People will respect you.

(Dudley qtd. in Basso)

a girl raises her hand, says
 you didn't put in the periods

the teacher looks at me puzzled,
 how can the sierras
 be a cheese pizza

*

a woman says even when
 she watches tv she irons because
 she can't sit still
 her toe nails blackened & fell off
 because she was walking
 22 miles a day

woolf sits in her room trying to get at
the moth/the waves
 she finds it is a thought in a room
 and its associations
 and it is one person after another
 making their internal observations
 it takes one sentence at a time
 broken by bouts of headaches
 that put her out for a few weeks
 but she can think, she can stew

*

season-changed sky
 the clouds in me pass & pass

i have picked up the ice-smoothed stone. the trail has gone up through forest to the glacial
 lake. i have come out, having walked among bear and cougar, unharmed. and wind is
 everywhere, picking up, and putting down

mamma now thinks what was sprinkled
 around the cheesecake
 were rose petals, not geranium

having no religion, having fallen
 by the wayside, weedy

there, in the softened clearing
 of dark, fantastic stars
 i don't know their names

everything's a torn curtain,
a dropped veil, a thunder cracked sky

what is there to remember?

out of the mouth coming
the stories for these movies

the baby's nickname is drama

as if you could be anything other
than that

the star is always us & us

sand in the ocean, the old ocean's
dust-filled, ash-strewn

watch. watch now, the light from
last expirations, stars, watch
for the fallings

a figure, too, made of clay,
to represent a living, naked model—
the figure, by the time
of her death
crumbled clay

having rain through the years,
how soon we sparkle in the specks of earth

marilyn, it turns out, was furious
about being cajoled into
doing *some like it hot*
she was pregnant
she was on downers & alcohol
she was sick
of being a dumb beauty-blond character

october-december

the u.s., i hear on the radio,
 in ten years will be able to
 project a holographic image
 of a peaceful person or a saint
 from the air above a war
 as a means of communicating
 u.s. benevolent intentions

*

fire has poured over the surrounding
 hills and canyons, in all
 directions, devouring faster
 than rabbits can run
 the wild grasses are long past any seasonal green

*

water will slip off & pool up
 sludge & flood

and what does well with ash
 and heat will come back green

to see the familiar door
 to have the key in your hand
 and there to turn the handle

not announcing, i'm home
 but it's known

counting which days were
 fired up

it was a week, the last one,
 in october

lighting a porch with tiny-flamed
 jack-o-lanterns

maybe you'll sing

but not of heart's losses

it wasn't thunder it was helicopter blades

up high but unable to see a thing

what is this ash
your refrigerator the rabbit bones

fired away the immigrant
scrub layover spots, their small camps

this is where we hiked & took
that picture

time warping in the fire

nothing but a heart
and then a soul beyond nothing

it's cold; you've made a fire in
the fireplace
but neighbors smell smoke—
another fire?
the fire come back this way?

up there, giant otay peak,
an ebony pyramid

if you could send a reverse breeze,
a backwards time-lapse filming
this way

no, seeming reversals of fortunes are blessings
we're told

no point in hurrying through

your bags from the flea mart
 your dogs who knew something
 was up, fussy that morning

a beginning

they say, we got him
 it's the point dog picking up the dead duck
 this one's a ruler fallen
 scruffy haired saggy faced
 what they got isn't what they once chased
 the maker of a country's misery
 already fell
 bush stutters his uh's between
 9/11 and hussein, a kind of link
 without saying so

a neighborly gesture, pantomimed
 like a hawk's wing, her hand
 across the trading winds
 the arc of the line traced
 by the upswung sheet
 a leaf so brilliant at my feet
 calling, hawk cuts the canyon's crevasse
 rain might come
 or just more grey

clouds have definitely moved into the skyscape. intense winds surge east

under the blasting black sky, everyone took whipped cream on their chocolate cake,
 along side their cherry-topped cheesecake

Cedars fire and Otay fire have almost certainly resulted in extinction of three butterfly
 species. [Dave Faulkner, a San Diego area entomologist] mentioned the Hermes Copper,
 Quinto Checkerspot, and another. He also said the list may grow. (Stewart)

When I am grown up I shall carry a notebook—a fat book with many pages, methodically lettered. I shall enter my phrases. Under B shall come “Butterfly powder.” If, in my novel, I describe the sun on the window-sill, I shall look under B and find butterfly powder. That will be useful. (Woolf)

thank you for passing on
the jacket that you had worn
if you find the dream, tell me

then the baby kicked
with elbows and feet
a blender of blades
a doubling of twinned limbs
a code we thought
saying i'm more than one

she comes and comes but does not come
and so the hospital
is where she arrives

another double helix another spin-off
of the great spiral

love incarnates in the nest of troubles

we are fired in our struggles
burning off what we once were

she comes to us
makes us up

and 8000 years ago we were munching along just fine, thriving on tideland greens,
shellfish, inland critters, and acorn

once, we came as a unit,
a small clanned crowd
now, we go, each as one
a different way of relating to you

what it was like without
writing, going on what we were
telling each other

the glitter out at sea is, i see now,
gulls diving

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