

beetle & swan

julia doughty

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

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drove over to what they call devil's hole—a huge impression in the side of a mountain, then a deep-set small cave filled with water. it's completely fenced, so you can only peer down. there's pupfish there, too. an eerie feeling, looking into the mother.

sun is setting when i drive back to the reservoir to cook dinner. i'm out here in a nevada reserve, dirt roads, natural springs, & an hour's drive from the freeway. no sooner have i got everything out then a guy with a gun in his truck window drives up & starts talking to me. says he's been hunting, what am i doing out here alone. says he's just shot two quail, gamble's quail, i think he says, not california. he thought i was out here shooting ducks. he gets out of his truck, says he has to case his gun. i leave my knife prominent on the tail gate, he says want to see my quail, i say that's ok, not really, but he walks over, pulls them out of his pockets, & shows them anyway. he's been asking where i'm from, why i'm here, where i'm going to stay. i tell him i'm meeting my brother & sister-in-law around here tomorrow. i'm lying for self protection. he says it's cold, you can't stay past sunset & the sun's already down. i'm putting my stove & tortillas & cook set away as fast as i can the entire time. finally he starts his truck up again. wants to know if that's my beer can on the ground. doesn't want strangers littering his state. wants to know if i want to come stay at his place. he's got a four bedroom in vegas. no thanks i say & thank god, he drives off.

and the wise woman says
 desire for what you want
 the body or the moment to be
 is keeping you out of your self

they lost the [whatdyacallit] and had no picture no
 sound from mars

they, a few days later
 announced proof of another universe
 to figure it out they had tracked a moth
 around a light how you can't see it
 had tracked two planets around
 something bright & hotter than hot

consciousness made herself
 and reflects herself

the wise woman said awareness of desire
 is a mirror to the self

they (another they) said
 it's a hundred year reversal
 more mexicans coming in than italians

she changed her last name to get
rid of her father('s)

they (or he) said yes, it has been lesbians and gays who have led many of the changes

that was how he wrote about the hot stew always there in the cabin always there

Human nature has to do with identity but identity has nothing to do with any one being one.
(Stein, "Geographical History, 365)

men had worn dresses in ritual in order to impersonate, inhabit the power of women

Menill stayed with Mukat. Moon Maiden, Mukat called her. The Moon Maiden took care of the creations. She took them and showed them games, how to make this from that, painted them and colored them. She put designs on them and made them dance. She just trained them in everything she could find. Then she would sing the songs to them. They would dance and they would kneel down and touch down. It was all of them together, not just one or two. She would make them do this.

But these beings were not ordinary people. They were beings that were supernatural. They had strength, they had power. And then there was the Moon Maiden. The story says that Mukat overshadowed her. Moon Maiden had the feeling that something bad had happened. She could feel it. She felt bad. She never said a word to anyone, she didn't tell them she was going to leave them. But in the night, she left and went up to the sky. She never told anyone, she just left without telling them where she was going. The next morning, they looked for her but they couldn't find her. There was a pool of water. They looked and saw her in the water, and they all jumped in there. But she disappeared. They saw her reflection from the sky. They looked up and saw her. They called her down. They told her, "When you were here we were happy. Everything was beautiful and wonderful and we miss you. Come on down." She just smiled at them.

(Dozier 21)

the bed's supposed to be vacated
at five am
and each day is its own device

there are always bends in arms
and legs
taking poses like night-lit
road signs
directing the body into
the horizon of day

*

and the cook later was none other
 than yourself not alice b.
 just a quick visit & then back
 to the desk to finish grades

*

Using essence to define character and emphasis to define plot is using the principle of vibration in literature. (Grahn, "Calling Without Naming," 258)

*

katleen was sick, first a fever,
 next her foot, then her arm, then
 her back
 i was the doctor, i was the mother
 the doctor had her do the ridiculous
 squeeze a vanilla dalmation four times
 & the mother stroked her arm, all sides,
 with barbie doll arms

she heard in a story with ms. frizzle
 about becoming a bee
 that she had 20 teeth
 and i have 32

she said the first bell rang rang
 the second bell ringed ringed
 the fourth bell chimed chimed

*

at the library on the new nonfiction rack on december 23 1999 i find bernadette meyer's book
midwinter day, written december 22 1978

*

once i surfed and that
 made me a surfer

the grandpa at the beach, on two canes, his legs sprawling with each step, hollers, "i'm gonna
 catch up with you," and, "isn't that pretty?"
 he's seen it all so he can say that now & his big old heart showers gifts with each of those little
 words to that racing around three year-old

the shoreline a page of light & foam lines
 arriving & dissolving
 there are no messages like tea leaves

a seal's head in the surf a fly caught
 in the car
 sun high up

in the important moments of goodbye
 i've gone away weeping my head off
 all my limbs with me and yet not intact
 the unseen part left behind
 and that part sometimes
 taking years to reattach
 and by then i've been replaced cell by cell
 into a new body

sometime next year
 i won't be in that goodbye moment
 i'll be wondering if the carrots need less water
 or if this current friend is going out of her mind
 because just this morning
 she was saying she didn't want to live
 and now here she is gabbing away
 about five dollar skates she almost
 bought at the thrift store

*

First, from about the seventh month in the womb, an infant "imprints" to the speech used by his [sic] mother. . . within months after birth, actual word structure begins to form out of that imprinted foundation. (Pearce 29)

*

there's a little one year-old running
 around the fountain in front of the park's space theatre
 she's using her new found screech
 and her mamma is catching her
 before she flies off the edge

*

on christmas as we sat around
 the table eating our brunch
 none of us was sure
 why you couldn't have your
 father's name and be, say
 ted II. you had to be
 junior. or the third. teddy
 said the second, if someone
 said that, they were being
 pretentious.
 and what about girls named
 after their mothers?
 mamma named me after
 my great-great grandfather, gran's grandfather,
 who was mayor of alexandria
 & who had control of both sides of town

. . .I had an idea to write a book that would translate the detail of thought from a day to language
 like a dream transformed to read as it does, everything, a book that would end before it started in
 time to prove the day like the dream has everything in it, to do this without remembering like a
 dream inciting writing continuously for as long as you can stand up till you fall down like in a
 story to show and possess everything we know because having it all at once is performing a
 magical service for survival by the use of the mind like memory. (Mayer 89)

*

can my mind go blanker & blanker
 so i can get out of the macabre
 amusement park
 the tilt-a-whirl
 where anyone can be lined up
 for the spin?

*

there will always be
 the student
 like a bull
 waiting in the pen
 for her chance
 to buck the riding teacher

*

then & then the walls had hardened
 competitive, having wine & lunch
 what do you eat when your partner
 isn't eating what you like

there in the yellow cliffs turned into
 rich gold

and the waves coming in

you could begin
 with a word to describe

how the night poured into the spine
 how the velvet wasn't
 painted cheaply how she hadn't
 digested all of this yet

the smooth canvas of the soul
 always here
 and here and here

woodpecker, unnamed, taking out its meal
 from the bark

the door infinitely open

walking with a handful of seeds

in the night the valley of hip creases
 opened a creek of ache

the mountains of thoughts
 the leveled planes of the unseen body

“the action, not the emotion, the drama”
 (david mamet's friend)

to develop never timing the self

vary the sundial (laughing)

looking back at success & resting on the laurels

or not

are you going to work
falls off the tombstone

the food gobblers and runners
off counting minutes

hello again at twelve months

the house of light

each word measured out a length
of continuous lives
and most of us couldn't remember
the words that came before us

the former president's book
ghost written & fictions presented
as nonfiction the movies
he once saw
he came to believe were real
he had been a primary
player he had been
the first american to get
to buchenwald

now the music swells

records old indians
singing lullabies
she bakes bread with them

swimming through dissolved salt

*

because of his contrary understanding,
man looks for god
so god seeks god due to his own delusion
when his delusion is eliminated
he stops looking
he attains true contentment (Muktananda)

swami rama tirtha (1873-1906)—a mathematician who became an ecstatic saint of india. at age 27 he left his teaching job & took the vow of monkhood. the following poem is by him:

the dream of the gyani

yesterday i had a dream.
 in my dream, i was working hard,
 driving oxen at the plough.
 tired, but exhilarated by the exercise,
 i decided to return home.
 it was only for the sake of my dream-home
 that i was out at work.
 i quickly bathed & dressed,
 and set off for home with a light tread.
 i was covering ground quickly,
 when my exertions wrought a strange miracle.
 they suddenly brought the dream to an end,
 and i found i had arrived at my real home.
 i awoke to my own true self,
 at home at last in my real home.
 in my dream i was going to the dream-home,
 but i awoke in my real home.

*

who's going to float up
 out of the profligate publishing
 and slushing screens of chatting

*

this city glimmers & spreads so fast
 revives & heaves out
 who's indian, saying she lives in "rural country"
 what that means is big bingo &
 lots of big new houses
 spreading big heaves that meet the city's

and to be an occupant was so
 often to be a renter
 to be a renter was to know that
 you weren't home
 you could move

moving each time
got more complicated, more
things to move

*

you occupy your mind

whose writing was from the writing
of the words
and who came from here
an occupant of here

you could think you are she
and that is the thing

*

the vet put mineral oil
into the lungs instead of the stomach
of the sturdy stallion
and so the horse
lost his life
and the vet,
the vet
couldn't even say sorry

*

an elephant is bringing in angels
to keep us steady
in our trippings over thresholds

*

they slid on the rain
rippling the tin slitting open the glass of their cars
breaking into their skins
they didn't get to go where they were headed
this is where they were going to go

*

so the guard's head was lopped off
 by his jealous father
 & then on demand from his irate mother
 his father had to give him a body—
 and quick!
 and so that's how the head of the guard ganesh
 got to be atop an elephant's torso

and so angels and an elephant
 come & go when most needed
 at the passageways
 watch for the big footprints
 & be on the lookout for subtle brushings
 of close wings

and, as well, fresh milk missing

*

to really be here
 signifies to not go away any more (ananda maya maa)

*

to be counted
 let go of the numbers first
 get into the zero of no security
 then there will be plenty

*

there's no one else's life you have

to move
 and to please her
 would be both incline and decline
 and neither

and you would meet her
 where you are at

*

so then a saint
in india is walking around naked
and someone throws a sari onto her

she steps out of her
empty closet and is fed by
the kind mother cow

*

What is marriage, is marriage protection
or religion, is marriage renunciation or
abundance, is marriage a stepping stone or
an end. What is marriage.

(Stein, "Mother of Us All," 204)

*

when the nuns arrive in rome
to their mother house
if they're from spain
they're first offered a nap
if they're from france
they're first offered a meal
and if they're from america
they're offered a shower

*

It would seem that where we are each of us always telling and repeating and explaining and
doing it again and again that some one would really understand what the other one is always
repeating. (Stein, "The Making of Americans," 233)

*

underneath the house
is another whole level you
 have to
take steps down
painted steps that curve at strange
 angles
and tiled steps
and you pass a bath in
a passageway so you think

—it's not so great you
aren't missing what you
don't have—

and then you arrive far under
where this one lives
 down here she has a huge bathtub
as it turns out
 she has a large room
and further, she has a whole freezer
(it's packed with the owner's food—
why would the owner leave
loaves of bread here—so hard to get?)

 but it is under my place
and now that i have been
given renter's ownership i am
 relieved
 to know the sublet money
will keep me from falling
into another collapsed state

and yet how could i possibly
keep her down here
 having all my life until now
had to pay so much myself
to rent some half-home
keeping some owner on high ground

Now then, mostly everyone is a good deal
in pieces to my feeling. . .
 (Stein, "The Making of Americans," 245)

and what is the breath for
in breakneck speed living
when she inhabits the house
and walks on to inner meadows
within disorderly living

there was a smashed mouse on the trail

first there was understanding
 and then there was the absence
 of it
 and by that a clearing
 and by that
 an understanding

Humankind brings nothing into this world and takes nothing away from it. . . (Nityananda)

and emily wrote to susan
 and susan wrote to emily
 and each crossed out and added
 to the other
 and this was how emily and susan
 deeply kissed

all flights
 of passion were no matter how
 aloft terminally temporal
 corporal grounded in fancies
 so that in or out in the
 true realm of heavenly delight
 were glimmers small small lights
 that could barely be remembered
 in the midst of these
 consuming travels

we laid on our bellies
 making sweet potatoes and acorns
 into real people
 making up the voices
 so we could come more alive
 besides being little people
 with limited words

and in ignorance as girls
 we made walls outside with leaves
 you couldn't walk through
 a secret place
 and then they would be blown & swept
 by a rainy wind
 and rebuilt until one last wind
 swept us into the secret
 walls of womanhood

ignorant there if we kept out of step
and time with all the great thinkers
losing track of them
and their long line of engineered
thinking plato aristotle
and theirs
plato's heraclitus & pythagorus
aristotle's euclid & ptolemy

apollo making a world
and a heaven
or medusa and athena
transcribed to teach us
how to behave

socrates fathering others

descartes making claims

dante and augustine
making outlines of highs and lows

christ becoming a million
resurrected figures

newton putting a plane of
gravity into all lightness

aquinas making all touch
a tangible existing god

shakespeare threading the thinker's
thoughts for spectacle
the unreal real on a stage

the world is the devil—martin luther
and all would stay in their
place as firm truths of descartes
what wasn't real was what
couldn't be numbered—galileo
kant's control
nietzsche & darwin
& havelock ellis
freud & all the rest

who those of us have not read
 but know in some part
 in some ways better
 than ourselves

& in other ways we make
 up what's real
 because we don't know
 how not to

lava is spun air
 and tufa is heavier

the little spires climbing from their
 sandy home
 a shiny line across the dry lakebed
 of a rail track that goes nowhere

mounds of borax in the far
 distance
 pink hills

end of the line so to speak
 but new rail ties lined up alongside
 waiting to be laid down

*

we rumble down another dirt road
 toward wild rose peak
 up and up the arched back of earth
 the broad alluvial belly of earth
 juniper laced with orange parasite
 mamma's avoiding the bigger rocks and
 potholes & some stones fly under
 anyway a drumbeat washboard drawing us
 forward
 she's thinking are we getting there
 these are just seven miles?
 i say do you see them?
 because she's not saying anything
 i can't tell if she's looking up
 she looks further and says oh my god
 there's the 10 charcoal kilns

that burned all the pinyons in 3 years
 we stop & take our cameras
 they're stone domes over
 100 years old
 and birds flap out
 when we put our heads in to see
 the blackened interiors
 (they are works of art the door's arches
 perfect)

*

angel's ladies near beatty

mamma says grandpa bill waited
 til he retired
 to get a library card

a packard at scotty's castle
 and a packard in the first chapter
 of morrison's *song of solomon*

*

three women stand in the route 99
 train station mural
 in indio
 they're mexican
 mamma says they're her mammy
 and her aunts
 grinning ear to ear
 & clasping their purses

mamma drives us from
 one remote desert treasure
 to the next
 averaging 150 miles a day
nothin' to it
 & in the motel
 props up the bed pillows
 stretches out her legs
 & knits another blanket
 for a child with leukemia

she says where we stopped for lunch
 wasn't that funky
 the little lake
 out in the middle of nowhere
 sapphire spring reservoir
 one duck chasing another
 hot wind rising up in big waves
 then falling down
 a snow peak to the west
 a rock range to our backs
 a swirled multiringed whorl on a
 hill we'd taken in
 from every angle as we
 hunted each hidden hot spring

beautiful funk
 a frog spreading big webs
 to push itself away into
 the folds of the pool's bottom

at the spring's underground source
 white clouds of sand
 billowing & drifting up into the turquoise water

at the quiet hill
 a large break in its granite
 slit down to a deep crevice
 to water in untold deepness
 and fish who have no other home
 than here

we've come along the late light
 of one valley and another
 the sun making slopes deepen
 in black and rose
 we pass the dunes
 and red light flashes
 at the kelso tracks
 she stops and waits to obey the sign
 but more in hopes that in all this no-traffic vastness
 a train is barreling down at great speed
she really must wait
for it to pass
 although it would be diesel now
 not steam
 it's just as much magic

she's craning her neck
 and i'm not i see
 both sides of the track
 nothing coming in either direction

pernoctate (vb); to pass the night in vigil or prayer
 (Merriam-Webster July 15, 1995)

ecesis (n): the establishment of a plant or animal in a new habitat (Merriam-Webster July 11, 1995)

*

the student says he was told to cut
 out *ands*
 another student says she was told
 to cut out *alot*
 we talk of the freedom of choice
 taken by laws requiring motorcyclists
 to wear helmets

and is it alot of assumption
 to bring a cadaver into a
 high school anatomy class

mamma's mamma appears in her rearview
 mirror, driving the car behind us
 when she was dying she was saying
 she wasn't ready, she couldn't go yet
 yet at the last she said
 ok, alright, i can go

filling up lots of space and
 moving around alot
 but not going inside
 the space so then missing it

you need to breathe whether there's
 a prop of period or comma
 or not
 breathe

*

“until recently i hadn’t gone to bed
 sober in 25 years
 all along i thought i had, i hadn’t
 so now the curtains are blue
 as if the sky has finally painted them
 a true color
 before, no color
 it’s both longer and shorter to get up
 and about the house
 feet, yes, i have feet

the nudges of an inside
 that ramble through a huge
 inner house
 rooms i’d never visited

but haunts so big it takes a larger
 sky than this one
 to keep the light shining

i have to face them
 or there’s no point

putting on my own
 this and every blessed
 morning to come”

*

cosmogony
 cosecant
 electrostatic
 falconer

*

Listening to repeating is often irritating, listening to repeating can be dulling, always repeating is all of living, everything in a being is always repeating, always more and more listening to repeating gives to me completed understanding. Each one slowly comes to be a whole one to me. Each one slowly comes to be a whole one in me. (Stein, “Making of Americans,” 54)

*

quaff: to drink deeply (Merriam-Webster Aug. 18, 1995)

let's say it's you
it's been you all along

rattling on like ever moving cars

o falcon o dove
shambles yourself compared

hardihood's been the response
"back then
we still did have fountain pens"
at our hardwood desks

proven methods to help you
the brimming clear lake

lillith
you're so much one for free flight
a whole one in me

*

cloven(adj.): divided or split especially to a certain depth
Susan is traditionally represented as having cloven hooves.
(Merriam-Webster Sept. 27, 1995)

load load
load of hay
make a wish
& turn away

proof of the path
the photo

wash off the particles
around the time
you're around yucca mountain

never leave here
hollow tunnels of knowing

it can take any amount of care
to find her

she may be after awhile there

taken after
it was after
the two oregon lesbians were taken killed & dumped
somewhere
there's a photo

fool with lacy veil

around corners
yelling
after

she may be after awhile there
somewhere

wash off residues
after awhile the dumping off
in the area
(yucca mountain, nevada)

rubs off
it can take any amount of care

the straight actress who played the boy receives the award
close up: her husband cries

it can rub off on you

alien border crosser

if there is a river dreaming
it's dry

huddled by fence undercover
by blanket

eye bright moon
luminescent sky blue

all the w's didn't figure
tight muscled mouth wait

hidden above in plane's sleepers
ally

lined into trench

they're telling passengers how to use
the air mask
in case of lost control

*

those two women

what you don't see are those two
they had come along
laughing their teeth
shining their tongues had already
slipped stopped made themselves known
it is not impossible then
at edge of town and brush and
so near gravestones
in the shadows of cruces mountains
the village of uprightness what is
their eye of god
those two under broad dusk sky
without a stitch
alive unlynched not run off
(another view of ansel adam's "moonrise, hernandez, new mexico")

*

with her gesture she implied "i'll try"
and packets of her opened

nomad and sometimes erudite
uncorked killings at every surrounding surface

she could shoulder her own snake

unarrested
oil painted as
persistent blood throbbing jugular

not identified as the one speaking

*

puzzling to splinter the roar
of thought

glitched gears taken for granted

salt symbols formed
even in sluggish self-made jail

and here comes melody
makes porous the impervious

those grace notes chew
through stubborn bundled nerves

*

nitrogen infused by the ground energy
meeting the lightning
so you would come to me at last
bolting into all my cells
upsurging my weak attempts to be you

a spider rests
above the bed
my head

*

st. john of the cross went without sandals and that was just one sign to others that he was flaking
out on them

she says damn
as her poem floats over the deck & onto the bank
she's wearing heeled sandals & long narrow skirt
& goes diving for the paper
it'd be my luck if it flew down the canyon
& she takes hold of it

she's revised the poem from last week
has put it in with three others she hands us
but she doesn't, she says, want
to read it after all

she's not really alone
in it she mentions the bed
where she doesn't allow touch
in it she's trying to make sense
of how a leaf
got caught in her sister's ear
in all these poems
the word *how* reappears

when she said damn
it sounded like my mamma
it sounded like the women
of my family, southern women
most all dead now so i don't get to hear them
their pretty & small damns
covering for all the big stuff
they had no words for

*

well yes there are snow patches
and what of it
the tree leafless and the three
dogs yapping below
it's spring & just enough heat
to get me up into the old
tree ledge
naked, i look out at
the white caps and there
comes my lover through the dry grass bluff
all bundled up
forehead creased hand rising
like a bird flying
towards my limbs
but at the moment
i'm only seeing sun

*

the bread will stay
 the cup will float
 you will fade
 the ladle will be a hundred years old
 under the shelf
 a list is being added to
 a match to be struck
 leaf branch left in a jar of water
 brick wall now covered in brown plaster

*

i was sure the fish had their eyes
 on some escape
 and she could only see
 into the short future of her belly
 it's the bright yellow tablecloth
 that brings out these differences
 the glow of the oil lamp
 that keeps us together

*

in no way meant to be kept secret
 the hanged or dumped
 to please self righteous and warn
 those mundane similar others
 it could be one of us next

curious how the universe set us
 as itself to be nibbled by phrases
 of backwards evolution

the third day comes and comes
 snarled by shock's onslaught of forgetting

yet what's more
 heart or what you please
 to say is creator
 you, after all
 shaken free always was
 always would
 love the idea
 without being
 or boat

*

clouds are beds of twin queen
and king
the peaches at the window
are the naked mortals
fallen free

*

there's a cadaver
someone's given me
& of course it's not
legal
the blood comes out
i'm trying to be clinical
& i want to call others
it's so rare to be
able to look inside
a body
but i can't
& i wonder who she was

*

today big foot's people
let a lock of his hair go
into fire & smoke
into sky
who really knows how many
died that wounded knee day

startled a bit in the drab
moment of fulfilled expectation
the pecking and sweeping
revealing the kind of content
that would fill a private notebook

it's familiar to auction all the thin sticks
of the usual story
and it's really gold to dig out
the other, lesser known part

plates that were cracked clatter
through the rest of the day
some say this is to fail
breaking the safety of the poised alarm

*

we are not the burning city
the appearance of crumbling
bone and brick
the dream we chose

*

the pronoun "she" needs more use
in the affairs of what's decided
for us

you'll have to believe the violence
is actual
not a scene somewhere else

stop slowing at car accidents
on the freeway
just to watch

some say love home money

form follows content

does it take going away to breathe

now the models are on a break

getting out of one kind of tale
to tell another

elusive complete sentences

pick up a book

but there's a bed to sleep in

you may learn a lesson
not necessarily teachable

give up even what you know of this

*

if i have been afforded the luxury
of a daily hour
i still might not take it
just now today at the same
hour as yesterday it is cool
and at the same hour last year
it was very hot
i think the sun is going down
earlier than any other year
at this very same time
but i could be wrong
and i'm mistaken to believe
any hour that parallels this one—
next month or last month—
is the same
i put on the hour like retreads
still, i'm never wrong because
i'm also never right
that's what the great ones
say they say get over your
altars where you mumble
to yourself what you think you need and you rattle off
the same moods
i'm made of salt and water
and soon i'll be out of my
own small sea

*

a small yellow beetle with black tracks on its back
crawls slowly across the natal plums

*

above the parked car roof
one hand with a cigarette
the hand is shaking

*

on the radio the jailed topeka woman
 says damn right i liked the looks
 crank got me thin that attention
 lasted for six years

i'd been reading this morning
 how the devotee was told to
 go ask the beetle why goddess
 was praying to the saint's dust
 so the devotee asked the beetle & right away the beetle
 died & the devotee
 went back to goddess
 for the answer again but
 she sent her to ask the swan
 but when she asked the swan
 the swan died and then she went
 back to goddess &
 she said go ask that woman's
 baby daughter & when she did
 the baby burst into
 a full blown enlightened being saying
 thanks for visiting me
 you released me from my beetle & swan lives
 thanks for the question

in this error and perfection
 of the slip knot of existence

*

wind finally, santa ana, that could have been here in october or november but it was raining or it
 was foggy or the days stuck together like stubborn ice cubes. now leaves scrape the street and the
 outside heat's on free all day. it's strange, too, because there's clouds

*

and what we ruin is more than
 what is disposable
 and what we keep
 may not be what will keep
 in the long run

copper disk indentations
 of erosion in the yellow sandstone cliff

one dewy cobweb inserted
 between yucca leaves

a man climbs a very steep trail with a three year-old, acting as if it is a common feat, so the kid is doing well, but i'm shocked to see her on this trail so say, "my goodness! you've come up all this way?!" and he says to her, "i think we'll go to the top, i think we'll go to the top," and she's innocent & trusting & trudging along

two hummingbirds squabble

*

here's a wooden bridge on its back where it was tossed by a once-winter flood, pressed up to a small tree, cracked at their meeting

*

bones made of water and bugs and fallen seeds

if the ranger can't eat the fish
 of these waters
 how do the plants
 carry on their thriving?

*

wind comes through in silky gusts
 "what about the angel?"
 "uh, i don't know"
 two walking up the creek

*

light pouring through early or
 leftover mahogany puffs

crow
 in disguise up the tree
 by the river calls
 like a hawk

thinned out to no one on trail
 crystallized air
 clustering bees at wet ground

does it matter where you begin
 what the plan was
 rocks throw down the plots

there were two women living atop
 palomar mountain
 one in a wheelchair
 the other caught sick
 and died
 the living shouted hoping
 a horse riding neighbor in passing would hear
 it was a week when two men came
 by then the dead one stank
 it was winter
 i don't believe the next part
 because good water would
 be needed—
 they pitched her down the well
 & where they threw the bed
 sprung up huge twinned oaks
 the springs are still embedded in the wood

grandma parents & two little ones on a bench eating bananas looking out to the sea

the couple walking in front of me
she stops & wiggles her hips
he stops & asks, "hula hoop?"

i burst out laughing
they turn & see me & laugh
he says, "english words"

the whole landscape washed in thin fog
but the sun's in it, too

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