

sky cloud trail

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, canéla, jessika, bob, susan, hollis, mel, all my teachers & friends & the ones involved in *ensemble*.

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january

this story goes from a fallen state
 to that of eden
 one has to go on after that conclusion
 looking, looking, ponds gone
 a teacher who jumped the fence never to return
 your insides quiver, rattle around the
 core of fever
 there must be knowing that is other than
 light or dark
 warm oil in the palm of your hand
 now people heaving miseries
 and an infant, for a short while,
 figurine goddess
 standing in the rain and
 on your shoulders the tappings from sky
 or one day is forgotten because
 of another's weather
 do you know the reason for january first's fog?
 a page of the ancients lasting
 a remnant of the same thought
 grapes coming through the ages
 along with kisses
 along with horses and ships
 and men, always men, for war
 old stories retold, what you believe
 for your kids is good, this soup,
 this friend, same story

*

upending uprooting now here's the pioneer
 going to greener fields
 starting fresh, so it seems
 habitat has the same requirements—
 food water shelter space

*

a narrative please

but a story's told, a poem's written

this tilt a little later away from sun

*

as i go to sleep at night, it occurs to me sometimes that i have never known the grecian
blue-green waters, the dust fly up from running african gazelles, or the symphonic
crashing fall of a chunk of alaskan glacier

i will never again fall ill to the same puzzling complex, being told i was old before my
time

what happens now, now that i am no longer young, will elicit different comments

but no matter, the world has come closer, truer

for many years i complained, “my house...my lover...my job.” as i let myself in with the
key, i would go through the monologue, make and remake the same list

*

but wait, pause, breathe—wait, one moment wait

alaska becomes possible

*

she says that what they say is superficial and so they make cookies to fill time, but she’s
worried she’s looking old, at last, and she’s looking for love

two pigeons in either hand cooing

when the young man shoved hard the little shopping cart, i remembered how it felt when,
at last, i tried yelling, i threw punches into air, hurled rocks

what must have been going on the years i kept my hands folded in my lap, just as the
nuns had taught me

a raven atop a telephone pole

a homeless man, his foot bandaged, hobbling down our neighborhood sidewalk

talking of—

you were the beginning of the cleared swamp

now we know there was never really faithful love in plantation days

up to your knees in mud

making carolina gold—
rice for the master

who really loved whom having appearances—just as it is now

going along because you have
no choice

how to get in the pleasure
without planting seeds

what kind of democracy
what kind of leadership

don't say america

who is we

your poetry isn't around here

who was saying it is gone

careful of the ways words go over the internet

all what you know scrambled

some are making bundles
and it's paid labor by taxes
teaching the new language
the modes of the humming screen

would you like to sit with me & sing a song?

now here comes another story, and you know it already

movies are like that

what goes on
what gets pulled 'cause
it's too close

you are beautiful

you walked along the riverside and before they could catch you, you jumped into the
strong water, saved from the lashings, alive at eighty to show how you did it

typewritten poem
bound book

the bible getting made
into other stories
the ones civilizations
have made & remade

crying is mostly unrecorded

one night feeling free, just
before sleep, of all worry, strife

and the dogs could always
go faster, find the downed ducks,
the escapees

indians bound to the farms, too

you were held together
by the kind of prayers
we will never know

going to a bar to dance
the rough edge
the walking out
the gun shot

just the start

again

here, sit here, on the bed

one two three, so many
there's no true count

you could have your own
things in africa
even if you were a slave

it takes more than time
to be free

ali learned to take the punches
and took them longer than
he had to

there was not anything
what we had was not
everything, love could
be about a pocketful

your french not like mine

bible stories

you weren't even known to
jump brooms then

our questions our answers

indians bound to their forms, too

don't make this up

like water, like what used
to be brown rice

spoken for, i heard my name

the one smoking her own
grown tobacco

like forgive me, only unsaid

knives wonderfully sharp
made harmless

where would you go?

the flowers to get in twilight

to want for that lifetime your kisses

there being no other
but the singing stream

it is over, someone is saying

and true, skeletons over there
are resting, in the square
of collapsed earth, the others in closets
we will not open

and the bottom of the sea

your hand in mine

taking the petals by handfuls—
to let loose over ground

reading of us

the ring we never wore

send yourself off
to be with me
love and no wishes at all
to fly on

making this all up as we go along

dance the way you do

waves good & long, the days
of surfing now

may i not say another salty
comment about another

she is dancing on the small stage

we were not looking we were
not there

we could be singing
and dancing

vacuuming spider webs from the corners

flying into the blazing coastline light

your silhouette, the range of home's hills

so long off that journey

solo flight, no dog, no cat, no kid

flaps of the curtains in
ever so gentle breaths of wind

circled smooth stones and
pink shells on the bookshelf

now and again a question

interesting or funny or maybe still ironic, at every turn, some string of words, possibly
not at all pertinent, appearing, the kind of mark having a journal gives

they say isabelle, they say
they will give the wash for nothing
to help the dog

how to massage a human goes in different ways than a dog, a cat, a horse

maybe moonlight for our dance, away from the floor, away from the others

while fred & ginger made lightness of their problems
warner brothers made stories for the common laborer

songs that didn't just say you could be happy

but do be happy

say nice things

imagine you could go up
off the dirt floor
the clay chimney would be
replaced, you wouldn't have
to keep a fire going to keep
it from crumbling in rain

you never know what's going on inside the couples' lives—better or worse than what
story to tell

the buddha dog coming up to each of us, cuddly

if i meant to say anything, it was love, and all those retreats from the shore, i went on
praying to have a kinder tongue, to bring me in, to stay on the warmed shore

going nowhere?

have a drink of water

over & done with
your wooden box dissolved
so the gravesite earth sunk in

over & done with
but look who's here, talking
talking about you

story outlives our times

the spine well used
of the book

rare collections—oral stories

get a ticket to the next state

sentences unfinished but
you know what she means

now i sit on a bench in this flower-laden park, azalea, gardenia, mum, old plantings
grown large and lush-colored. a girl runs by and she has for centuries.

i am sitting in the solitary place of no conversation, single words coming up like
bubbles from a deep bottom—"it is warm" and i could be that ant, active and with
purpose, moving, undeterred by leaves that fall in its path—in fact, the sun has gone just
behind the nearby tree and i will not stay; it is one thing to sit in daylight, quiet, and
another to do so in nightfall—where words come out of their hiding—there's work to be
done, touch territory that is global, unsplit

i'm not going to be, uh-uh, in all that mud for christmas, she said

even with the umbrella up and the next door house roof nearly touching the sun, hot light
poured onto the patio

two mid-aged gay men, one listing sideways, stepping off the curb

on the freeway heading home and stomach turning backwards into forgotten pains, then
mercifully discarded repulsions

the headlines long gone
now it is lighter just a bit longer

there must be some way to get on with it all

the black puppy half as big as me, putting its paws up onto my stomach—

giving a little lick

somewhere over the rainbow

to be telling and it's always going to go somewhere, whatever the route, straight line or
not

this little train of mine
huffing and puffing up the hill

mid-life crisis, she's shaving her legs, wearing her tops and pants tight

go away for the holidays, ok, but don't take the relatives with you

the big lot of firewood
half cluttered half gone
the chatty fireplace set
for the soon arriving family

the days when we women
called each other sisters

i'll be friends with her
if she loves her dog
but we're not all going
into the same bed

the alone years instead

say it all together, take your time

can you sing it to me, sweetie?

one knot in your shoulder
exchanged for the hands
that rub it

will tell you soon what i'd always meant to

taking out the machismo of
hip hop, he's saying

atop the mesa corn would grow
from just the bits of summer rain

wandering and eating
off the land until corn was
in our hands to plant

at the very same time
across the world they had
elaborate homes, huge temples
and the most sophisticated
sculpted faces

talking of your skin starting
to show age
and she's beyond that care,
repeating over and over
her name for goddess

yucca sandals, dying at 20

maybe warmer, maybe not
but rain has stopped
and stopped

someone with a broken back

corn pumpkin pinole
bean rabbit

what's named kokopelli

don't say, don't name them
"americans," the continent is more
than the u.s., she says

offering your work, it's not
just a business,
those dogs are just about smiling

if we must go on, and we must,
then finding our happiness
however we can

in the early morning hours,
planting corn in dreams,
outside, the gopher busy

it was your question

how the story escapes me
and the parts of it
come in to tell a piece of it

now the plane is off to its
next destination
trucks can't be stopped

eat the fresh, really fresh

another sister, singing,
how you wandered off
and in your house
stepped on a land mine

we can not save you
with our bombs

eco blitzing

hand in and hand out
we have your food

we are living, we who live
out the long days, in bodies
made for seeing the bright
outline of the imagination's play
made real or so it is
called

what color is cobalt—
black or blue

your life this or that

dropping the handful of seeds

i am going to walk on into
the masses

i have put one foot in front
of the other
for now the message goes
unimpeded
brain to spine to nerve
to muscle

did i move my arms? did i look at the backs of those in front of me, or the ground, the
cracks and ants there?

now i have the story, the sound of those who have been walking, the ones behind me, the
ones on either side, the ones before me, the waves of war, the tides of caresses and kisses
—now it is so big and common, this thunderous rolling of walking in the steps of time, it is
hard to hear it all, at all—stand then in the grasses, and make nothing of it

why want you who i can not
have, who, in any case, has
no mind for me

then i saw you last night

enough of all that, those songs

climbing and clanging with one side then the other of a choice—going down & letting it
go—

what if there was no more
to be done
midstream

you wished me well
you couldn't tell
that i was crying

we've been led to believe
it's our fault we have no money

that the rich have worked
hard, so hard, so hard
they deserve the bigger tax break

the hunted face no longer appearing
in the pakistani papers

who is weaponed in favor
and india's bidding her time
in hopes for favors

some of my ancestors were indentured servants,
ones who could not go home
until their years were done

one had to sleep
tied to the bedpost
with her mistress

having come through the ages
and loving to sing with others

there, at four o'clock, they are
walking to the church of god

someone's voice saying what
has been said before
at pulpit, podium, class pedestal

words not keeping up with
the time

home, where would you go,
if invaded
all that you know

so much poetry for money
contested, prized

even the words of the wounded
rendered into gussied artifacts

what can be made up, dressed
for the occasion

the breath, even the body
a subject made into object

to be all subject

beginningless

when there was a train, and without
cover of blankets, our hands, and more
touching

then seven years disappearing into
solitude somewhere

never really alone

a place known so free of choice
and dualities

for you some tea...?

kandahar burka jihad taliban al-quaeda

received words

wanting to tell you of the black sea,
its beauty, its rusting nuclear boxes

try to

and you're about to say, where?

you didn't know
that i'd been crying
over you

and time is moving on

your friends the women filmmakers
and writers who we never
hear of in the media

it's a day to kneel in the garden

then which country?
what numbers, a mother like mine,
gone?

and now for your hand in mine

the ringless years and still, you
and i, family

absurd premises

sipping the hot

for awhile going the way like others

“it is generally known, for example, that some ranchers deliberately destroy shrub
vegetation so that no federally protected species will nest on their land”

weedy fears

ready, on the ready

unable to break through,
old train, say it clear

they came running and out of breath

there is someone talking
behind our backs

her name and her name and
her name absent from the
papers the tv the radio

let me look at your face

this world

one on the chair another climbing
the stairs

after
different bells were ringing

i was a judge
you were on the cusp of the sign
we shared

too difficult to explain

alighting, the hawk has
a changed terrain for
hunting mice

you will walk

i have you in the light
of timeless beauty

thoughtless, going past our dream
of how this would be

ancient, something must be done and nothing is done,
words drift out of use

coming back in by a makeshift ship
not even held together by whale fat
just another hour, this minute, mine
to write

saltier tongues than these days

offerings of time and weariness known
and set aside

he may be dead from cancer, or
he may be walking about disguised

where we have walked
so many times before

unstructured, the sun
in ever different veils of sky
the cliffs today beaming gold

and how i pull and want,
little remark, that, too,
can be put aside

hundreds, no thousands of miles
back around to this pocket
of beach

all the turmoils of wanting
each part to be what
i dream, the dream,
the life, illusion

look at these shells in my hand

we're getting good at this shared language

it doesn't correlate, what i experienced then, the story that went with it, to how i would
experience it and therefore tell it now

reshaped

simmering, always

one place as good as another

without the idea of freezing to death, sleepy, walking on & on to the other side of the
untraversed, frozen island

must be strong for them

having no true feeling of anger, remorse
tearless

a mirror of my irritation

at first and at last, the photos
that got in between what
was a beginning & an end

i wanted to go on

to go on talking, writing

to go on living

i said i would take care of her

i have said it before

i have said the same to others

i used to be more open
now those display leather couches at costco,
scratched with taggers' markings,
make me sigh

why lift our feet,
moving along the bluff's trail
and onto the beach

this is where all the others
have kissed and moved on

the summers, the cold or warm winters

red-eyed days, hardly knowing
how i walked

why recall? the past is the past

across the world already fighting
over servitude for crops
while the southwest anasazi
were just beginning to plant
beans corn squash

with a wave of your hand
more precious to me

how is it possible to go on loving
when you're not, have not
for so long been mine

i will stand at the top of the canyon, taking in the soft heat, the hazed sky, the bird calls

what is passing overhead
and on the street
metal, yes, engines in motion, yes,
and ones who breathe,
who are immersed in their own thoughts

i do not press the sufferings to me,
still, in dreams, i remember how
easy it is to dive under
the ship, to go more and more
into the acts of evil, its own
kind of feel-good feeling

some dear one is dead
another, raped, can not turn
her face to me

then happiness, then sadness,
what scaffolds
are in place to uphold the self

listen, there is the talk of work,
“lecturing me on being late,”
the truer voice without sound
or any reason

being, “going without,” she appears

to take in the hour alone
considering

there is the plumber again next door
a woodpecker works the telephone pole

pulsations, all

(the vice president in secret
living quarters)

even as careful as can be,
saying what is unnecessary,
who wasn't friendly and kind
enough

telling truth, going the long way,
by way of illusive perception

now a kiss on your cheek

please don't become another character

lead or follow, no difference,
the worm in its mud home
its idea of happiness

the hand, last week cramped,
improved

you're aging well

as if it were a fact, being born,
going on, growing old

oh speak to me of love

of course she was asking for more,
more and more

ok

in a hurry to get there

full and brimming over, what's
there to want

to be made up
to let loose

look at this skull in my hand

in language so hard, so shared
i'm laughing

so many words once for sand

it doesn't correlate

staying awake in all this dreaming

feeling and not saying, so heart breaking,
calmly being

the summers in the surf

breathing, sighing

hard or opened heart

there his cancer, there all those
babies

choose your place, clouds

with a wave of your hand
i'm still in the hold of desire

to dive under the surface
into antarctic water
for the rolls of film
only to be told to destroy most of them
(so as not to risk life again for them)

a place to go, the car's running,
a secret paradise

sick on love

after gophers, after rose branches

just before the question,
as if in bed without needs

beyond things, the drinks of need

like this free rosey sky

waking like a nun before dawn
practicing the acts of prayer

that any play or poem is best
or better

don't say a word but tell me
all that you know

warless

because it's your birthday, because,
just because

for now, then, to be
we're on the sand, the waves here

the sand is pulling out now each year,
 a rockier beach, the mark of
 constricted pathways of run-off

how i will love you
 how i will miss you

coffee, and now green tea
 you and apples

what could be sugar to me
 and no wheat

souvenirs, how could this be,
 shells still

where we might go next

there is a stream under this cement
 under my feet deep in the earth
 all was once not so dry

how the pace of work addles the clarity
 and rangings of mind

weeds coming up & pulled

striding out & then staying put

which kind of faith-to-go—
 to go on so little and maybe
 the coinage isn't the point

the banker didn't like going
 to college after all those years
 of grammar, middle, & high school

you can write your poem
 in the shape of a heart. yes

a flush of love & then
 the real parts cooling the flutters

i have no idea what i'm doing
making a plan, a portfolio
a maze—
the slide showed keyboards
and satellites but no humans

one day the cell phones will
ring you up if we're
in a disaster

does a leaf fall straight down
from a tall building

how to look at your rock—
from the outside
going inside

maybe the beach smells
sweet

the curve of cement highway

where i have reached the
limits

where gas is still to be had

of course you are poor
of course you stand on
the crust covering the untapped oil

enough fighting for one day
enough, that's enough now,
for centuries

how your mind bounces back & forth

how it rests

a wind a light light rain
a gopher's head a small pile
of pulled weeds

the dandelion to blow

for i had come from
the den of thieves

and the little ones write of water
and rock
and wander in and away
from what they know
from what they could say

then a village was gone
then another leaf, here, was falling

pulled away to make a living
dying to get back to the page
the poem

what's in a photograph?

sleeping, but not really

you who have been trying
to tell me

the ground, the stream
the far underneath
that place not of the market
not a language

who has arrived here to be free

they were on their way to
their canyon camp, back from
the tomato & flower fields,
the white boys threw rocks,
took injuring bb shots

coming home injured

love, tell me your heart

asking for bread,
i'm sure of it, that's what
she had been trying to say
in those last breaths

wanting to do this with kindness
without debt

where you are from, the ones
who swept earthen floor,
kept something warm to feed
the others

if there was no tiredness

the girls are writing of
roses and hearts

i don't remember how it was

a song in french a stomach in war

the college bulletin board of a world
not entered
rent, job, intern
europe

we who are the old voices
of art, the full cup,
the hanged one—(they say it's just
a partial dangling)

after the ridiculous attempts
to get a drink, the rice,
the tender looks, we wave,
sure of seeing
each other soon

and then, the vine of age creeping

on our shoulders what we once were

me in the dress and long hair

you in your thoughts, in your
black coat, ever out of my reach

such beauty

there, the stairs going to
no open spot at this hour

translating and often there is
no difference, say it as you will, this illusion

now life in and around, this shelf of books, the broad blue of sea covering the view west,
parents coming in by foot and car, smiling, to get their kids from school

i will go, then, down and up the concrete walk of the hill—every house made in its own
idea of seaside comfort and well-afforded taste—i am a wanderer and have thoughts that
will not settle on the opulence

i like the spare lines
the near-empty spaces

and poems, insistent voice,
calling, through fog and night
and more fears than i can name

it doesn't matter if she heads
back to denmark, her homeland,
and returns to california, her home

you could go anywhere

but it does matter, the feeling,
the boat touching in here
then there

more cold, more days of no rain

always more wanting more
always plenty and still wanting
always without and there is enough
some are saying they are living
on beans and rice
as if that's a hardship

the two dogs waiting,
leashed, barking at what
they see and who they imagine,
chomping on canine candy canes

often different human voices used for the dogs

when you can't decide then
don't decide

sand is rock too

after all, your roof is sound
even though the walls crackle
when touched by cold or heat

off in the distance whales' breath markings

what came before today
what you ate for breakfast then

change change change

how the quiet became even
more companionable

while, long ago, meanwhile
their pills, their smoky joints

friendly, too, and the mind
swimming in its own space

all these years taking steps to feel
more friendly even toward
those three tough tattooed
college guys waiting,
just like you, at the corner
to cross

if all harm went down
the gutter, past & present, prepped
for any future discomforts

you, a cloud wishing for wings,
it's not so much about
happiness, you know now

sock hop friday night for the kids

if after the tiredness, energy
surfaces

mangling the words,
it's i love you all changed over

still the tight dresses the long hair

without dreams, desire

how she waits for you still, desireless,
lady poverty, she who needs
nothing

water is like a beetle
a flowerbed the kid wide-eyed
and quiet the roasting marshmallows
at the fire ring you when you
would sing

opening to the tributary going
who knows where

ask to be happy with whatever
you get

those weedy fears

julia butterfly hill says do something
her critics say she's taken on
too many causes

barefoot walking and talking
on the stage

getting older, saying less & less

what's a writer to do

even talking about
the actress's performance counts
as speaking critically

keeping open as the destruction
goes on

yucca mountain salmon & redwood
& here, the least bell's vireo

if you can afford it, keep quiet

what it means to let go

the fly with a thousand
views at once

oh dog who has one wish—
to see where its mistress
went, to see when she will
return

this mutual attention

beloved watcher

where we are singing, standing
underneath the rain sheltering leaves

how who and what
we know, the unfamous, so
no names to drop, to make
us, maybe, ourselves, famous

she's calling out, she is selling
her silver, the two little ones
are staring through the chain
link fence

never having been to europe
or hawaii, or other usual
american destinations

here, then, she sits,
robed in yellow, quiet,
her hands in mudra

i waited all year to sing with her

with little news

what is the water's strength
moving through that bend?

bent on loving you

this page to turn it's the same page
you were on last night

what is there to remember?

offering rice and flowers to her

an apple that you will eat

any winds picking the alkaline from the field of emptied owens lake and scattering it in
lungs close and coastal far

some of the kids thought buffalo
once roamed here

and there would be waiting
for the meal to settle

there might be, again, water
that brings to life the little
shoots of green

after tea and a cookie

your face, lasting longer than
the aging photo

those effects of the arms
the eyes

often, the news too much to bear

here in the squared lot, the thirsty
dry winter yard, the three
bedroom house

your face, another country

dismissed from the record of
this century

watching the snake in the yard

coming out because of
the blast, running toward
the large farm, the rain
making the earth soft,
making you and the baby,
here we go, slide into
the fast river

tell me no more hold me
it's not like coming back home,
singing, or like the old days, whistling

and all hell broke loose,
meaning, you lost the baby

if there had been a tree here,
maybe a live oak,
you'd never know

stream tributary waterfall
spring river cloud snow

missing you

salty tears

we'd go by way of the swamp
traveling all night to see our
loved ones, back in early dawn
for field work

then the roof rumbled

a large rock off in the big waves
minutely breaking down

what was once so darned important

looking at the redwoods while
floating in the river's curve

your naked terrain

off in the distance
the shots we do not hear

you have a couple questions

she who is capable of creation
who eats everything that is great

dissolving like water into herself
this world—and the next

the bird in manzanita sending
a thousand-noted song
up canyon

full moon up at 6 pm and
out still in the dark of 6 am

having to forget ourselves in order
to go on

you like the saint icons

only once, in leviticus,
being admonished as a man
to not lie down with a man
as if he were a she

going out by way of the
riverbank path, the moonlight,
returning in time for the
morning harvest

grapes lettuce strawberries
beef chicken eggs
tobacco cotton
poppies pot coca

cranes crocodiles tortoises
rainforests redwoods

rwanda somalia afghanistan

if you live to see the seven wonders

primordial body aging body

beauty,
you are that

and the spectacle of
the brilliant sea, the visceral islands
from the wash of rain

our capri, our galapagos

*

if you could go out
on the limb, extend the narrative

aspirate—breathe

aspirant—keep searching

just sitting there

what else is there to offer?
a glass of water?
a bosc pear?

hail and ice and snow

*

and having been looked through
as if nonmaterial in your cold eyes,
why consider at all
the flip side serenade

for instance, the phone call
asking for more
and later finding the severances
from what is

*

having received instruction
from the sun, the moon
but with no talent for retention,
made to befuddle myself

*

from the heights of chaos, looking down on days, those days walking around in their
mundane, narrow-fielded vision; those days called one phase or another; that job, that
lover, that break down seen from here as all one, one disorderly day

perhaps the ballad of the sea of peaks

here is the door where one pays money and goes in, where one hears the music that most
are accustomed to—

ever after, that moment off behind a tree
while you stood waiting
in your pretty dress, leaf in hand,
our shyness

a poem, a small cadeau,
a little precious gift

eat crusts and write

while, meanwhile, vice prez
visits and says war's not here,
it's there and we have
years to come to get at evil

peace, of its own accord,
those political talks, bedroom kisses,
footprinted futilities, erasable

february-august

a cat today crossing the street, mouse in mouth, checking over its shoulder for
 contenders, going under the curbside sedan, reappearing, as the mouse may have in a
 similar gesture, rising out of its hideout, the cat emerging to sidewalk, taking its time
 now, and walking up its familiar garden steps, surely taking its modest feast to a sheltered
 yard corner

from another vantage, light taking over the surface of scrub,
 mind going off into narrow spaces

thomas merton on his way to the orient, there he is stopping over in san francisco,
 buying more books than he has room for

yes, this is why i have my library list—to limit the desires and save the poor pocketbook

why are we created to crave?

this is to be merton's last journey

“of being at last on my true way after years of waiting
 and wondering and fooling around.”

if i write a poem or the other, uncategorical writing, or not, i am always, really,
 as merton says, fooling around

amazing bright lupine seemingly bursting with merriment in this early heat

reservoirs in our backcountry look much the contrast in mood, droopingly low, a nearly
 rain-free winter, the hungry jutting ribs of barren earth

merton says he's going home, to the home he's never been
 it's so much a pull, to follow that inkling

which is the best seat? the zoo bus driver is often asked. she points to a random seat,
 the visitor believes they're getting the best

she says, it's just a bus ride, no need to get worried

sky formed into another heated plain, today unscuffed yet by smog

the road above the beach being picked apart by the beak of a hungry bellowing machine

men and metal assembled to get the job done

below the cliffs, tide taken with inbreath of the sea, a black lab chasing squatting lone gulls, running somehow paw-proofed over exposed contorted barnacled rock

conflict overcome
the sea mixing itself

*

all these apples from the yard sweet but wormy

persistently working, paid or not

*

the lantern swinging
and there's the noise
of no light leaves that won't
tremble mark
in the dirt saying which way
can't be seen

*

across the world, the elephant put her foot down,
the butterfly lingered on leaf at bright pool's edge

*

juin juillet aout making up the sky

*

merton had already found his east, he just didn't quite remember

*

merton with chatral rimpoche:

“He said he had meditated in solitude for thirty years or more and had not attained to perfect emptiness and I said I hadn't either.”

*

wind gust pulls the surface of the pond into ripples of light, the trail sweet from this sprinkling rain, the pond loamy. webs around small snake holes, a skink quickly slinks off trail

*

your wife's name tattooed on your finger
 the drumming added to
 the wedding ring makes blisters

*

they didn't have to go the route
 of the ones who, reaching
 a kind of heat they'd never
 before known, reluctantly
 crossed the desert

bound by their wagon and
 a pre-made trail,
 waves of woods and unpredictable rivers

going where money might not
 be earned for a long time—
 a coastal woodland too wet
 to get through half the year—
 a place to get on with
 a few cows and your
 own adapted duck feet

you could outdo thoreau
 but wouldn't have the energy left
 til progress, the train,
 the cleared and regularly
 farmed land, and old age years
 got you to get down the early days
 for the tillamook paper

and to have had no one
 in any of those times
 of carving your life
 called husband, wife—
 no, just ma and pa

*

he says when they release the possibly contaminated nuclear cooling water, they turn the ship in an arc so it doesn't touch the sides.

*

a forward motion by being still

*

“you’re not going to get your electromagnetics in working in a sky scraping building”

*

a little bit of french riviera
 a little bit of maui
 spectral shapes embraced
 by toxic glooms

*

during every interval of leaves not stirring

talkless moments alone, like with you

you call on me to perform my
 angel duties

wet and with sore feet

le ciel est bleue

let’s be here wherever it may be

let’s not stop and go stop and go
 let’s stay

what makes a person do that

a tragedy to hang clogs on and weep

leave your shoes here, by the door

just now bon jour

i watched your face in the cued lights,
 yours, the character’s

green, how the dry summer
still propels growing

because of cherries and raspberries
plums and mangoes and you

westward ho
frontier surpassing all directions

know that you are loved

letters you could never send

high up, le ciel, les nuages
i have always been with you
this big sky of blue all
for you

you say isn't the dog so cute?
you're watering and thirsty

and the doorside plant blooms brilliant fuschia, close enough
to painting the door red

accuse what you will

wishing only for the ripples of peace
untroubled waters

*

after the niña blows in coolness
after crushing heat

don't go so far as to forget

do you remember blackberries
purpling our fingers,
the round curve
of deep river?

your dead grandmothers, the entire
side of my mother's family,
my younger brother

the trail

and the dresses you could wear
not missed

*

some days i have the full
strength to know all of you

in the same hills, owl calls
and featherfalls, leaf falls

*

she was hungry,
and in her song-like voice she said,

i'm thirsty, i'm thirsty

and she was

miners mined for ore
the creek was a mill
now the sky is full of late light's golden nuggets

*

the woman who did not come back left the marks of her tears, the black streaks on the
face of half dome

*

the sky fills up on itself; wandering clouds couple and part, shadow-in the lake

light makes its trails across the washboard lake
wind goes hot and cold; it's the season of turnings

*

hot and the ground rain wet under oaks. still a story to be told. off past where the sun
appears to be sinking, our ground disappearing

the canyon trails clear in the dried grass

september-november

the sky bustles with brilliant clouds
layered over gleaming black

adams avenue rumbles with all different sizes and colors of people; lots of munchies and rhythms of zydeco, folk guitar, ska & latin jazz; the snaps of opening and closing wallets and demoed food choppers; and shoes all shapes plying the asphalt pavement

wind picks up a little book off the park bench
and carries it to earth

light haloes blue-edged clouds

by any other name to be known
by a shining that needs no candle flame

for exuberance try going nowhere

for the love of land

why go toward them with soldiers
who are masked for war in a hot season,
or with bombs
flung from here to there

the wheel of children squealing at the fair

then other clouds rippling around patchy clouds

drum beats from the street

i haven't forgotten, it returns
in a present moment,
the past isn't, however, the living
thing it once was

a baby declines cheerios
prefers the touch of grass on fingers and legs

low-cut blouse tugged at
by her hand then french fry
popped into the mouth

destinations as planned
yet circumstance its own weave

palm trees that are brought in

music or peace
to be learned

for every bit of letter by letter
to go on as if there will be enough

formulas for success old & primitive

go on & your smile has cuteness

you never know
perhaps we will save the day

a calendar of gardens

geography returns to school
because of war

power points breaking down

small print for your eyes only

little ones, two puppies in the shopping cart,
and two, one each, in two women's arms,
the mamma dog so anxious and
unable to reach her loved ones

blooms of this evening

a girl is what a woman's called
once again

the made path undone and
made again

what's forward

a building full of people falling
isn't how the door
swings further toward
the whole world falling

count down of seconds
to midnight

my my you are lovely tonight

desdemona: perhaps i will never come home

you are the same as me
although your hands are busy
around your briefcase

sky cloud trail

one by one cars, a city stream

sweeping is simple can be done
any time anywhere

bubble surfacing what ants
and other insects would be here
what roots & ground of leaves
if not asphalt & cement

o love don't go

for now just now even now
for awhile
stay

hummingbird perched on small twig

you were saying

and all the interruptions get received

still i know what you are saying

how i once saw a body as
what i was missing

sweet papaya
stiffening fingers

how a body is a story
to listen to but no longer own

more in love now

what you'd like, if you could
get it again—
a tall glass of good water

going into the realm
of breath

often we have shored ourselves up
without any direct idea of how

once i could hardly bear to walk
through a sea crowd

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