

HAIL TO THE THINGS I CANNOT SEE

Hail to thee, oh unseen things. Hail
stellar contraction shaping dust into a sun,
atoms waiting in darkness to begin
their fusion blooming solar fire,
electricity chewing across the wires in the wall,
neuron signal causing the heart to beat,
hormonal impulse causing pubic hair to grow,
synaptic exchange causing the mind to change.
I cannot see any of you, but I know you are there.

Hail
Oh ovum tumbling out of the fallopian waiting room,
into the clean blood darkness, alone,
waiting for brother sperm.
Oh seed generated from testicular emptiness,
looting and rioting in the vaginal night,
I salute all you unseen makers.

Oh heartbeat, accelerated
by smell of a shampoo
that reminds of junior high school French kissing,
first touching vagina, exciting stink, who knew
it would smell like that?

Oh sorrow held in chest cavity
upon the smell of incense

that parents burned to create atmosphere
during their alcoholic stupors, apartments of black outrage
with Charlie Parker's Tunisian horn
blowing holes into the night.

Oh rain of tenderness falling on face,
brought on by memory of candle making
with mother on the porch of the apartment,
colored wax dripped into shapes carved in sand—
Hail to all of you, the invisible evokers of time past
and the things that happened and shouldn't have
and should have, and had to, but what do I know?

Oh wind keeping seagulls aloft, squawking and hovering
over my daughters' and my hot dogs down at Santa
Monica Pier.

Oh gravity that holds the trees up and my bones together,
web of sun's stellar radiance that wraps this earth,
sphere of mud and bones, in perfect location
for the growing of our brains and other cosmic windows.

Oh sunlight, tinkerer of soul and mind,
creating my waking and seeing with your clear yellow light,
waking me with your rising, pulling me to sleep when you go,
my body like the oceans in their tides.
I am you, all of me, I believe.

Oh sorrow, endless holes in the sky and in the heart,
you are there again, purple thing, river-like, deliverer,

brokenly smiling the way to light.

Oh silence, kindest hush of mind and time,
loving terminus of all, the sky of purest now.
Silence, holding and blooming sounds
of airplanes passing through clouds, 7th graders
whispering in the back row, heart beats
like bubbles coming to the surface of the water,
all rising from silence, all stone and gaseous
vapor and vision laying upon silence.
Love laying upon the silence, sunrise
out of silence.

Oh Hail, hail
invisible things.

I LOVE THE SUNSHINE

It's 6:30 a.m.

I'm in love with the sunshine,
the sun that shines all night.

I don't want no foreign chemicals in my body.
There is only sorrow and no love in that.
My sorrow must have love.

What do I see here? The sky is blue
in my mind. My neighbors start their cars.
Garbage trucks sigh, and squawk
and hum lifting garbage up
and tossing it into their big mouths.
They are loud and smell but are symbolic, personal
for I, too, am a big mouthed garbage truck
clattering lyric dirt and stink
through the neighborhoods of dawn and I am

recalling life as a young kid in Santa Monica
watching garbage trucks slip their forks
into the side slots of the metal apartment bins
and lift and flip all the egg shell cigarette cat litter
into the hydraulic guts and belly. It was
sexual. I can see that now.

Santa Monica trash trucks were sky blue
and filthy.

It's 6:42 and
you can't see what I feel, anywhere.
But I feel it everywhere.

Ted Berrigan roamed New York
while his babies slept.

And I sleep in the room next to my pretty ones
and wake to work for all our loves
and Ted Berrigan roams
through the city my heart has
built of poetry.
Oh Baudelaire, you don't have to
do anything here.
It's all done.

The sky turns its blue all the way up.
It's simple.

God Bless Pepsi-Cola, donuts,
sun.

ECHO PARK POOL

I'm at the Echo Park Indoor Swimming Pool,
thinking about sonnets, watching my daughter, Penelope, swim.
She's learning how to do the free style.
She lifts her arm up out of the water. Then the other one. She lifts
her head out of the water to breathe. She stops and stands
and starts
again. It's a lot to do.

There are a bunch of kids splashing in the pool all around her.
She swims around them.
A woman in blue swims in the deep part of the pool.
She comes to the wall, flips around, and glides the other way.
The life guard is a cute girl, small, with dark hair, and soft smile.

The pool is blue. The water looks blue
but I know it is not. It is water, clear and the color
of your hand.

My daughter makes fun of other kids.
What can I say.
I am sitting on cement steps, looking at the pool
and I am sad because I am reading poetry
and that's what poetry does to me and I like it.

Poetry is all about having people talk about you
when you're not there.

Penelope, Penelope—
the name is like jewels and balloons to me.
Maya, her little sister, is like the ocean, glassy waves rolling
in to shore like the back of a whale
and she is like that to me.

A little girl runs up to her mom,
asks her to fix something on her suit.
She's got that look on her face, where you
can tell what she'll look like when she's a teenager,
but right now she doesn't know how to fix her suit
and she needs help so she's got that I-need-help look,
the I-don't-know-how-to-do-this look and it's okay,
I was always freaked out to need help.
It's a great look, very wise, very open.

The thing is we need each other,
but I suspect people of plotting to destroy me with
their help. I realize this is a problem.

I think of holding my wife in bed, spoons, I feel golden,
like gold is shining through me. I am golden at the
swimming pool.

So Penelope is learning to swim
and it strikes me that God must be
like a bunch of parents sitting there,
watching their kids learn to swim,
letting them learn, looking up from their conversations

or books to see if everything is cool,
walking over to the side of the pool if there is a problem,
but mostly letting the life-guard deal with it,
and the kids splash around,
float, get freaked, stand up, float again.