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Oosh Boosh

Shannon A. Burns

University of Massachusetts Amherst, henryasleep@gmail.com

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OOSH BOOSH

A Thesis Presented

by

SHANNON BURNS

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

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Approved as to style and content by:

Peter Gizzi, Chair

Dara Wier, Member

James Tate, Member

Dara Wier, Director

Jenny Spencer, Department Head
English

for Dakotah

ABSTRACT

OOSH BOOSH

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SHANNON BURNS, B.A., UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

J.D., UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

M.F.A., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Peter Gizzi

A collection of poems.

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Deckhand Application #1

Several river obstacles have already been
revealed to me in my dreams for five years.

My eyes are the color of the river.

I'm a genius.

I am able to communicate apology to the river now.

I go down to the water and let the water into my ear.
I lay open my ear and the water goes in.

I hear a murmuring of complaints.

The river is all I think about, have mercy on me.

I found the missing deckhands.

They were in their rooms.

I turned the lights on.

Becoming Bad Suddenly

A lamp is on.

You lie down on the couch and

No one will mind if you sleep.

It's Christmas.

Someone makes cinnamony

Food and you close your eyes.

There's a clattering outside.

You open the window

And poke your head out

Into the smooth winter

Just in time to catch in your hair

The small fact of having

Become bad suddenly.

They Failed Us

so we showed them Bavarian architecture

so we posed them in musty gowns

so we slid them down shiny pews

so we made their lives more difficult

so we opened all their little pots of creams

so we took their hands and looked into their eyes

so we made them masters of their own destinies

so we cast balletic shadows over their experiences

so pale blossoms fell in front of our faces

so we put our socked feet in their laps

so we let things take their natural course

so we pointed insistently to the sunset

so we drove away quickly in buggies

so we touched them with wet bikinis

so we drew muscles on them

so we heard them whisper something

so we gave them cruelly small crowns

New Sun

Some head replaces the sun.

I hate him, someone says.

The temperature dips and spikes. We collapse
and recover, and look up. Nothing happens.

A pain erupts in my stomach. Perhaps
somebody's head has replaced your stomach? you say
and we laugh nervously.

We slap and blame each other for the new sun.

It's cold now and the air is chalky. My purse
falls open and the elements come in.

That head looks familiar, you say. Shit,
you're getting used to it.

Prince of Persia

I'm in the desert
but I have an idea
and the sand is fragrant.

I'm forwarding grains
to other territories.

The sand is strange
but I'm pushing on it.

Strands of elegant gold
strewn on a knurled old tree
begin to rock and shudder
and quake - it's a party
or someone's wedding,
and a field of will comes over
the tree and turns the gold
to smooth, bright sand
that rains on your face.

Somewhere your children
shriek on a trampoline –
Even good children shriek!
and their shrieks turn to sand
inside their mouths
and sandy their lips
and sandy their teeth
and they cough and spit
sand and shriek and shriek.

You find at home you
are reclining on a knoll
of sand and roll dully onto
your belly. The sand roughs
your cheek goes in your ear
forever. Your repose is heavy
on the knoll and changes it.

At dinner you feel your knees
rise to meet the underside
of the table. Says your date,
You always look sad when you're eating.

A chair collapsing into sand
beneath you puts you face-to-face
with a dog. Do you know the dog?

A screen of sand conceals
the gathering speed of your enemy.

You've lost your hands. Withdraw them from the sand.

Please do not spend
hours roaming your hot
house in the summer looking
for the things that have become sand.

Do not watch it form in the wake
of your lover's noisy withdrawal.

I only hollow out a little groove
here in the desert that I may have a house
and fall around in it as you do.

Terrorized by Tiny Real Bugs

in early youth
he was finicky
& terrorized
by tiny real bugs

*

now he is beautiful & not
old. he makes tea in a beautiful
grey teapot, and leans

*

in the light he touches
his own noble hair and leans, and speaks:

I am now ready
to demonstrate the effortless
grace

of my life

*

the hot water spurts from the cup
to his face

Relief, he says,
It is actually on my face.

Villain

There you are, my dear
I'm saying, I guess, to the broiling
evening star –

Someone here would like to make
an enemy of me –

but I've put my handkerchief
on my head and shaded
my eyes with my hand –

I certainly cannot be moved from my cushion –

I'm going to say something about God – !

Withdraw then
from my room –

And tuck the door in –

The fragrance of your robes beclouds me –

Your sash drags like a limp tentacle –

Your hat is a punishment
for believing your lover understood you –

Dome Memory

There were tall trees growing
inside of the dome and the trees's

leaves made a smooth nappy cover
like the, um, jungle

Also inside the dome
there was a bald knoll
for parties

Also inside the dome were
hundreds of talented women

At one party a woman wrote
on a tree

God is good, always
good

Then another woman came forward
and wrote her name in cursive

A little boy wrote something
and read it aloud

I'm psychic
and I can be invisible

At this two men
at the cone of the knoll got up
and became soul mates

Our teeth are the same color!

one said to the other, whose reply
was drowned out by the sound
of the dome exploding, or applause

Love of Nude

Some may remember my young period of nude

My long attraction to beige, pink, peach, and of course nude

The nude dress I wore on our trip to the Mojave

The desert, too, being nude

The beauty of the place

The romantic mood I was in

My barely perceptible movements

The nude stone on the path

How it relaxed me

How it became a magic wand to me

The nude you heard in my voice

The nude I saw in others

The nude chiffon

The stirrings

The disappearance into nude

The aloneness with nude

How nude unfurled its chill

How nude changed

This Explains Everything

Last night I thought I felt a worm in my stomach. I thought it was a worm with a needle head and a needle tail. Not a snake. A fish. This explains everything. Each time I think I feel something extracurricular in my body I think for one second, *this explains everything*. There's a knife floating in my neck. My bicep is ruffled. My heart is in my leg. This explains everything.

Pool Report

This pool depressed me yesterday
Today I ate a whole plate of bananas at 11:30
and so forfeited something
This pool seems fine
You can see the Sydney Opera House from this pool
if you haven't seen that enough

Now here's a pool for the ages
This pool is under a spiky black bridge
that looks like a hateful spider
What a ridiculous mess
Some people wear tall black boots and carry pointy purses
and want to be insects and receive money and awards

Others are cylinders of banana mash
Rotating in the sky over the pools . . .

This next pool is a circular pool
With a round-bellied man at the center floating
on his back watching the clouds with the expression
of a bus passenger who has looked up from a book
to see a building he knows well but does not expect
Wonderment! I love men
but cannot tolerate wonderment in my condition
so I turn my back to the pool and the man

A banana fog falls around me

Futuristic City

I'm looking everywhere for you
in a futuristic city. I see you
through a poisonous fog! Now
I'm screaming that I see you and howling.
The lights are monstrously bright--
I rub my eyes hard until I'm
spiritedly massaging my face
and have forgotten you.
Acid rain falls on me
and I have forgotten you.
Futuristic debris mauls me
and I have forgotten you.
My face is worse and bigger.
My head is the futuristic moon but
gentle, flaming balmily like a past
moon. You circle my swollen
lambent face and I have forgotten you.
God now you're hanging upside-down
out of a hovercraft and trying to kiss me. But I am
unbelievably still massaging my face.
I have forgotten even politeness.
The city is a bitter joke, a cloud of bolts,
forget me. I am lost to my itchy familiar
moonface. Your hand is a blue odor-
less tumbleweed. I can't quite feel you.

Orwurm

A psychic said I would know my love
by his tallness &
eccentric dress. Two years later,
asleep in my father's house
I remember eccentric dress is nothing
to admire in men.

My love, the tendrils
of my sympathy
are tough and orange as
corn stalks. More. The loose
bun of my hair is better
than a bird's nest. It is an idea
for a bird's nest.

But what if I can't wait for you?
One of my eyes is receding
for no reason. Douchebag-of-the-increasingly-smaller-eye
is what my enemies call me.
I step backwards into a cornfield
and it collapses
over me like spaghetti.

Mount Rushmore

In August I tried to stop liking you
as a favor to a friend who thinks you're gross,
and you are gross, but not in the way she thinks
you are, or in any culturally recognizable way,

or in any way that I care about except
that I always want to say to you, Fuck you.
I sometimes want you to be gross for me
like having a cold is gross, but you have no way

of knowing that and you are not a cold, you are
a thousand cars. You wrote me a formal note, and I
stuffed it in my purse. I am congested and you are formal.
Your high shiny head makes its formal argument.

But I am just staring at the way you look
in the middle of all this weird iridescent crap,
and I am drinking warm water and waiting
for someone to notice that I'm not doing anything.

Sometimes when I'm in bed, even when my congestion
is keeping me awake, I feel so athletic.
I am athletic and you are perfumed! I'm sorry,
that's not true, I'm just angry with you.

Through the spaces between the boxes I see
your arms moving boxes. You see my gold feet moving.
You are a smell, and a point. Tense, dark swimmer.
It breaks an old whore's heart to see you this way.

Clues

"Rockin' Robin" is a good soundtrack to what I'm doing –

And what I'm doing is very selfish, and it has worn me out –

And I have this problem – it's because I left Missouri –

Because I haven't gotten any taller in such a long time –

And I'm taking this class – but my professor is a shitty little

kid in a tank top – and he's just screaming that he's cooler than his dad –

It's for the best then that I cross my legs like a man – like Brad Pitt –

Because I had an erotic dream about this person I know –

where I motioned for him to sit down on the bed and he just

collapsed on top of me with his coat still on –

And I'm crying because this perfect, huge blue thing that means so much

to me is blowing all over the plaza – and my parents and everyone

I love are just looking at it like it's the sky –

Portrait

-for Jay Thompson

A friend wrote to ask me
how Catholic I feel
I remembered the doggie bag
of potatoes I'd forgotten

to put in the fridge
then returned and wrote
very Catholic
I passed out

and wondered when
I would see my friend again

my friend whose baby son
is a pool to the moon

moose's nose

small vibrating envelope
of pearlescent lava

I haven't had a baby
I tell him
I have the potatoes

and if one goes wrong
I send it away
in a car hastily

The Present

How do I face the whole rest of my life
when it's taken me so long just to find this boiled egg?
[holds up boiled egg]

In the sumptuous Italian countryside
I climbed up on a tree stump and basked
in the present moment – whatever moment
was the present moment at the time –
until my family came
and pulled me down
and sent me back to school . . .
[turns away, as if toward Europe]

Shhh, now I'm remembering a prayer I used to say
I wished peace for myself
my best friend
a stranger
& an enemy –
I prayed it in college
the stranger always
the same blond boy I'd seen.
[ignores nosebleed]

In the garden once with my father,
I watched him pick a perfect tomato.
If I were a tomato, he said,
That's what I would look like.
[lies down]

Has it been four years? I ask an old friend at dinner.

It has been two. My friend, it feels like two times two.

[spits ice cubes onto the table]

Kelly Brutal

Kelly's got no tits, really.

Kelly, brutal.

Her nemesis got called “beguiling .”

That's brutal, Kelly.

Out of nowhere she says her mom is her best friend. *Kelly* . . .

Her last name’s too short to say. It's Eh—

Eh—

It's Eh----

It’s brutal.

The very first time she wore her chinchilla coat
out she got shot. Jesus, Kelly.

She’s burning up.

She’s threatening to dream of her dear grandmother.

She said drawer is her bed and she can’t get in it.

You know you're breaking my heart, Kelly?

I know you're waiting in the hot car.

I know you're thinking of an old outfit.

You thought you found a little penis once growing out among pebbles
and sticks in your childhood yard, remember, Kelly?

And when you returned, it had gone back into the ground? Kelly, brutal.

I know you've always liked in repose to put your fingers on your neck and hold
one breast in the crook of your elbow. I think it's sweet of you--

I saw you yesterday, you know? Standing downtown on the corner looking around.

To Whom Does the Sky B'long?

I'm doing a re-enactment
of JFK's assassination where
I just throw a rock at your head. It is
for no other reason. Why else
would I do these things
Meanwhile
in my hometown the dumbass
wannabe gangster I grew up with
calls the night sky
breathtakingly beautiful –
From where does my drive
to succeed come?
My parents I think sometimes
are the tiniest people
on earth, they are so
mine. My brother a grape,
a little stone. And my love's pale face --
good common wedding cake.
But where does cool air
come from? On whom do the tongues
of fire rest?
What's a smoothie? Is it this?

What's the Scoop?

What's the scoop?

That's what I want to know.

Oh did you talk to Amber?
What's the scoop! Did she
have the scoop? I've heard
she's making a lot of money
these days, flying around
giving people the scoop.

I just can't believe I lost it –
it was a gift from my mother
on my wedding day. In fact
my grandmother on her death-
bed gave me the scoop.

I was in a coma once . . .
it was awful, but when I woke
up, I had the scoop. When
I was old enough I found a good
man and gave him the scoop.

Today my daughter came to me
and said she had the scoop.
I kept her home from school,
but it didn't do any good.

Poem in Case I Die on Thanksgiving

It's okay to just look around
and think about yourself
You don't need a magazine
on a plane
Let the people you're looking at
bear the news away from you
You can be putting lipstick on
and wiping it off
and putting it back on all the time
it's expensive
but what is money to you
Get on the famous train
to Vancouver you mentioned
Reject sensitive people
Reject the sad,
sneaky arrogance of nerds
Don't waste your life
identifying smells
or remarking on smells!
See your imagined touches
through & your pumpkin-headed
friends – see them through
bad times & pick them up
where they've gotten to
Have I ever failed you? No
I haven't! You know it
& think you're not as brave as I
but you are wrong on Thanksgiving.

A Christmas Poem

The sun is a big old bone

I'm sorry the moon

is the big old bone

The sun is a bunch

of big hay unwound

from the bale of god

looted from baby god's

manger before which

there was only violet

catalog light – I believe

this with all my heart &

I am a friend of yours.

Apology #1

I'm sorry I'm late.

There is a Michael Jordan blanket.

A blue sedan moves soundlessly
down a deserted Midwestern highway.

A mantle of fog above it.

I am aware of my failings. I'm young
but idiots have talked to me.

Ghosts have gotten me. I have a man
beside me stretching his long arms up
and rubbing his fluffy head on the wall.

His fluffy head, his long arms, long
legs. Thank you, God. His smell
like paws.

Apology #2

I'm sorry I was asleep

In my dream I said to my mother

This is an orange

.

But now I am on

my way to Las Vegas

This is not a Ph.D.

This is an orange

But now I am the baby niece

of Las Vegas

I have been an idiot

like cute boys are idiots

I used to be a bitch

before you looked

Now a bug is on my face

Now the tempo

of my nodding increases

Now like the only child

not screaming

I am my own shelf

Apologies Can Have Exquisite Impact

But there's no magic in it if you don't mean it.

There's no ruby in it if you don't squeeze it.

There's a trick to it I don't remember.

There's a fragrance to it as you slowly warm it.

There's a bathtub in it and some fresh towels.

There's a name for it when it works perfect.

But if you don't mean it, you won't find the hall in it

to the plot you knew when you were small, the place

you recreate in sleep, if you don't mean it - But

there's time in life, too, for the try-anything mood,

without which I would not have this limousine, nor

this long, bright tentacle slapping the highway with light.

Twenty-Eight

a crucifix fell
on my head but
it doesn't matter

I poked it so
I don't think
it matters

I'll snot around
here with a hump on
my head for a while

I'll snot around
this kitchen
with your parents

I'll keep going home
and going inside
and going to bed

Then when the
snow goes I'll be
twenty-nine

some witchy
children will give
me sweets to eat

some poems
of mine
will be bad

I'll work
at the
grocery so

the reverse
of everything
will appear

& if I hear your sound

I'll come back at once

with a crown on my little hump

Brag

I'm just eatin' lemon sandies and drinkin'
hot as fuck coffee in bed who gives a fuck?

I'm cottony and sweet in my little room!
My hearth is grand, at night I am pet b
y noble feelings. The snow falls softly
outside my window and I could pin you.

Now I reached under a bunch of brush
into the earth and pulled out a turtle, like
I'd always known it was there. It was
alive! I don't care about these things,
but you will remember it forever.

Maybe I remind you of spending the holidays
at your grandmother's because I am so kind to you?
I don't mind, it's easy - I found a gold nug in my tooth-
brush & my man treat me like the queen of England.

Home Lives #1

I called a book *orange*

And my friend quickly called it *pink*.

"The pink book?" she said.

"Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm,"

I said, looking at her eyelids. "Definitely a pinkish orange,"

my husband would later say and as my rage

at his unhelpfulness intensified he said it was neat

how colors could be that way and admired

the orangeish book as if it were a new and useful part of his body.

Home Lives #2

It happens sometimes that I am in a horrible mood
at the same time as my husband is in a wonderful mood
and he stands in front of the mirror admiring his naked body
the towel formerly around his hips thrown sportively now
around his neck, and with his naked body which is now dancing
he says what a terrible waste it is to be composing in my head
a damning speech against the person I hate and in my speech
I say the person I hate must be insane.

Home Lives #3

I insisted my friend not throw up
at the after-party of a party celebrating his life.
My school friend, brunette, stalwart, and our gross
drinks pink on the table. We were sure he
would not throw up and howled that he must not.
But he threw up on the dark bar floor through
his cupped hands. My friend on his twenty-eighth birthday.
We were solemn and blamed each other for this reversal.

*

At home, I am late and go to wake my mother
to say I'm there. My brother safe at school,
the blurry light on the stairs, my fingers on the bannister
noble-looking, good-looking as silent cars on the road.

*

In a movie, a young family lives through a tsunami,
sheltered in trees. I think of the man I might expect
to find unhurt in a tree above any awful thing. This man who
on Christmas I said I would marry. When I met him I dreamt
we went cheek-to-cheek to the peak of the dome of my room to speak
privately. When something comes true it's like a wreath in your body.

The Fear of Losing Your Wedding Ring

The incomparable pleasure of impressing your mother

 The sliding away of your computer

 The getting older and older

 The silver

 The snakeskin

The fake black velvet

 The money and the ass

 The memories of church

 The enemy teenagers

The belief that people are teenagers

 The wealthy fragrance of winter

The German apple pancake

The sleepy perfect friend

 The cold rainy beach

 The carpet in the house

 The squishy pillow

 The bouncy pillow

 The squishy bouncy pillow for your baby head

 The wanting to come over The coming over Come over

Come here

Come to your wife

Secretary

Tonight I have talked
to my mother & to my brother

& in the chair beside
me sits my husband saying
his small blessing to the cat so
that's all, I guess

but didn't I have more
people than this

& in Kentucky my one dog
alone and perfect in the yard

petting her I've touched all my dog

and inside me my crumb
of wretchedness glows
yellow-red and goes out again

that thing I care about
 is in the news again
that song I sing is on and
 that tinny sound is back

I think having the intention to make
a nice dinner is the same
as having a twin,

a good night,

a fun summer,

a difficult conversation.

Kinds of Handsomeness

There's Horrible.

Horrible

handsomeness.

Cold tongues

of it. Handsomeness

speaking the shiver-

pitch of horror,

handsomeness barely

told apart from

dread. And there is the

balmy whorling thread

of handsomeness

that was his – Sunsmell,

house handsome,

handsomeness

in the yard

seen from the door.

An Oriental rug, found

and cleaned.

In a man's kitchen,

a handsome set

of bowls. Handsomeness

in choosing things.

One may pull a detail

of handsomeness to her

through time

and pinch it like

hot glass to make a toy

of it to wear

upon her breast.

Particular

handsomeness.

Cut fine & kept.

The Pasture

In the field he was having

his photograph taken

and the house, beautiful

then, exceeding him

He went out, he said,

to clear the pasture spring

and in the brush he dug

a turtle from the ground

Now at the fair he's here

in the shape of the cave

and everything at once roaring

The end wants to be the dip

into which it all slithers

The end wants to be the sag

It wants your door and your blur
and your waterbed

You can lay down your curve
in the cut of the end

or guard your good love, duller
than the yard and slim

as the blue noise that comes
through the window at night

For My Dad (Oosh Boosh)

He was a big fan of mine
and died, so I permitted
myself to go to bed at 8:05.
8:05 was a good bedtime
for me not so long ago, it seems. So
Bedtime somewhere
said my bones and clinked each other.
My bones are unlike most
in their suspension in jammy stuff
their movement and sometimes touching by chance
And in my head the control center
it's a puffy bloody water wheel and no brain
And my appendix on the left side or whatever
And my wig is able to grow.
He saw all these things and thought more
of me and died.
Can those who will outlive me
come forward and help me
with this cold sunny day – this idiotic yellow day –
Help me confront the sunny winter day –
Help me to not close my eyes in it –
Help to keep memories apart from dreams in it –
Help me give the wild dead a nice place to live in it,
things to do, the feeling of being needed in it.

The Beginning

Now I've got rocks and skulls, turtle shells, antlers,
long weird twisting sensual sticks, notebooks
in which you wrote *holy ghost* in circles and tubes
and shapes I don't know that come to a point wrongly;
poems, a love poem for my mother, a dream that you
and she sit inside the poem you try to write – you talk
to her and laugh, blue glass around your table
and the home we had then; paintings, one you named
Mouth of the Cave but it looks like fire – driving somewhere,
Johnny recited to Mamaw *Some say the world will end in fire,*
some say ice. Mamaw said, You made that up. Now she
is gone and Johnny does not come to my wedding. I have
the story of you at the little beginning where you stood
once, alone, very young and handsome, and watched
the snow and watched the power lines explode outside
the room where I slept, probably, just born, not knowing you
or whose I was. When I saw you last, your up-high house,
an orange lamp, aquarium of oils, sandalwood, coffee smells,
the hot light that hung around you, and my brother there,
and my true love, and I felt young and bounced away.
It was that way with you. With you I flooded, I rockslid
and snowfell, and you wrote me down. If I could I would
remember you perfectly.

True

I had a very sad theory, my husband thought it was too sad to be true. I said it was only a theory, but if it weren't true, it couldn't be just because it was too sad. Actually in fact its sadness, I said, might make it more likely to be true, and my education flowing neatly back to me I said it was the same as how we know Jesus probably truly said the things that gall us worst, like *You must hate your father and mother*, that kind of awful thing, because why else would anybody have written that down? How else could it survive all this time if not plated by truth? My speech convinced me my theory was true. But my theory was not in the Bible, my husband said, it was just something I'd come up with, and I had to admit that was true. By then I had forgotten many details of my theory but had become quite sentimental about it, and I sensed it wasn't sad the way my husband thought, but more sad the way the recollection of a perfect moment can be sad, or the way thin morning light can be sad. I saw my husband had grown smug and silent. I said my theory must be true in order for us to live.

Plumb

Oh look what the cat
has chosen
Let's massage
the cat with applauding
and monitor the cat's
unfoldings
Let's see what
the other has seen
the cat doing Remember
I was afraid
of the cat once
when we first were
in love and the cat
was mean and seemed
to me a symbol of something
dusty in you Then
I saw the cat's
womanliness
and she saw mine
I gave you something
of myself
and so was able
to forget it Now
married we make a marigold
chain and arrange it
around the cat Look
at this piece of shit
we say and the cat blinks
slowly and is
incomparably beautiful

Or Don't You Like to Feel Nice

It isn't heroic to clean the cabinet
but it is something; it's the woman

who swept her floor in the evening
and at night lay in bed cruising

in her mind along the edges, fast
and unopposed—clean. It's

the birds that flew away and where
they were, a wide field

of blue. And the hill enrobed in snow
that sees the sheen of sunny sky

and shows a passing traveler
a strange and rare bouquet.

And this: the soft,
wool veil that rising

reveals a lighted pedestal.
And the violet fragrance

as she nears it.
And the carpet.

The absolute silence,
the love of God.

All Sleep

Pajamas may be a gesture
toward keeping
the planets in orbit

A cotton pajama may be right
for the sporadically religious
person at night

A sleep tee may be nice
to find
in the dark

Tee-jamas may be available
through certain passages

A slip may make a fool of you

But a nightie is something
that takes up no space in the world,
like a talent

Blue Thing Feeling

I like that clean cloth.

I like that fog that came in.

I think the fog must have come
in sometime a long time
before I did
and never went out.

I like that blue thing feeling.

In life I've loved sun and field
and pumpkin and have claimed
in distress to hate blue
things and have then been
afraid it was a dark sin. So I have touched
blue things and blessed them
and have said I am sorry
to them, which is more than I have done
for the red, orange and yellow things,
the things I love truly,
meaning love in the usual way.

One way to become spooky
is to send love through your hands
to a blue thing. One way to grow
to like that blue thing feeling
is to speak spells of kindness to blue
things in shame for all your life.

Then having blessed the thing
that makes you sneeze and makes you think
of your Mamaw's figurines and petted
the thing that makes you sleep and dream
of places you've been and won't return to

you can go float on the fog in your home
in your room
and touch with your clean hands
tonight someone you love.

Cassandra

It is evening
and the house, grand
in the Bavarian style,
begins now to seem small
and drawn. The curtain,
gaudily luscious in light
of day, takes on the easeful
character of a worn fleece
coverlet. And the molding,
shadowed as it now becomes,
seems to make of the pilaster
a darkly hooded sentry.
Outside, the sound and smell
of a pool. And in the den,
the waxing sense of submersion
in the fine wing of an owl.
The lamplight blurs and turns
umber. An unknown dog goes
out upon the rear veranda.
I thought we agreed to meet here.

Whipped by Peach Twigs,

tormented by memories of the hot
summer car, deserted
and thirsty,
stinky, thirty, our purses
containing unintelligible
purses, our sympathies
hardening into crunchy
displeasing balls,
insisting on sleeping
in haunted rooms, confused
by talent for bad small arts,
the silk wadding of unknown future
comfort growing to us,
we came finally to a clearing in the forest
and a woman in a long white coat
looking at the moon.