

Air Hunger

What's the matter with the oven?
It's not hot at all.
You touch the metal door
as if feeling for a fever.

It's time
to make a person
inside of yourself,
you say to yourself.

When you're short of breath
at the end of your life
or after climbing the stairs,
you have air hunger.
That's what it's called.

You have air hunger,

so you make a little mouse
out of a stone.
You use poppy seeds
for the eyes and nose.

It's not the oven inside you
that's broken,
you say to yourself.
It's the oven in the kitchen,
probably the pilot.

You lay down on the kitchen floor.

Later you're together in the house.
You're very happy
to be having your supper.

The soup is very hot,
as hot as the ocean.

This is really what you say to yourself.

Remember a tin can telephone?
You make a tin can telephone.

And while you're making it
you ask yourself,
as hot as the ocean?

Yes, you meant
the boiling sea
where life arose.

Boreal Forest

Road salt has dried in a crystalline pattern on the door of a Honda Accord; it looks like a satellite photo of the Boreal Forest. She searches Boreal Forest online. There is the vast texture of frozen conifers. She finds it holds one third of all trees. Browsing, she scrolls over the land of the whole Eastern hemisphere via satellite view. There are the vast sands of Syria. What are the bright white ovals on the land in Syria? She zooms in and finds out they're not marks from the war, these are salt mines. Then a different white shape, not a salt mine, but a cloud, obscures the city of Aleppo. A cloud must have passed over Aleppo at the very moment it was to be documented. A cloud, or a cloud of smoke, or a cloud of dust.

The Syrian woman walking in the desert with her tiny son told the reporter, *I bathed my son before we fled, but he is dirty now, not because I don't know how to keep him clean, but because the desert is so dusty.*

She types Syria and Siberia and clicks *Get Directions*. It would take them twelve-hundred hours to walk from Aleppo to the Boreal Forest, and they still would not reach safety. And when they were nearly there, they would walk through Chelyabinsk, where a meteorite came down with the force of thirty atomic bombs, and killed no one, because it exploded in the atmosphere, not on the ground.

Tapeta Lucida

We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.

Light will shine on dogs,
and change them to foxes.

The horses shall be changed.
We shall all be changed.

But, our faces are hot
from working.

Our horses are hot,
and alive from working.
Their eyes shine from working.

We shall not all sleep.

Our eyes,
our dog eyes,
our fox eyes shine.

In this Olympia

Leni walks the floor of Olympiastadion, and because she is no longer alive, she can no longer carry her camera body. Instead she carries a makeup mirror; the only thing in the world she is able to hold onto.

A makeup mirror is concave, like a very shallow bowl. It enables a woman to look closely at her own face without a loss of focus. Wandering the floor of the stadium with her mirror, Leni discovers that when the mirror lays against the heel of her hand that any image reflected in it is thrown back out and focused sublimely onto her slightly closed fingers.

With this camera made from her hand and a makeup-mirror Leni Riefenstahl remakes her 1938 film; *Olympia*. In this Olympia the stadium is desolate. As in the the original, Part One is called *Fest der Völker, Festival of Nations*. It shows the stadium's giant oculus. To capture footage of the oculus Leni walks the gigantic stadium floor holding out her hand until her arm drops from exhaustion.

Part two is called *Fest der Schönheit, Festival of Beauty*. It shows seventy-seven-thousand empty seats. Leni visits every empty seat in the stadium and passes her camera-hand through the space where a person would be, had they been sitting there.

Redden

The paper seemed waxed
or coated in rosin,
supple but resistant.

Sign it with yourself, he said.
I took it from the man
and wrote the word redder.

Although insistent
they were a kind
young couple
with a child.

The woman stood
folding a blanket.
It was a woolen throw
for a moment
then it was a
winter kimono
I'd seen
in the museum.

Then it was the curtain
from Paula's office.
Then it was my sweatshirt
with the wolf on it.

The father was vitreous,
an open door,
but worn.

The mother
sitting on the floor now
was inward, and resolute,
her eyes were so tired.

The little girl stood playing
next to my bed.

She wedged her cloth doll
into a spot where the wicker headboard
was coming unwoven.

Sign it with yourself, he said
and we'll be released
from Sloviansk.

We're being held
but we hope to return
to Ukraine to search
for our younger daughter
during the ceasefire.

Then the woman
pointed out words
I had not written
but were enfolded
in redder.

In redder was sodden
she said.
In sodden was woven.

In woven was often.
In often was open.

In open was tacit.
In tacit was folded.

In folded was rosin.
In rosin was coated.

She went on deriving and unfolding
until the door opened
and she rose from the floor.

Longyearbyen

In Longyearbyen, the midnight sun and dark winter don't concern me. They don't cause a disorder in me. You have the idea that it is either blinding or pitch black. But the light is changing and difficult to name. You arrive in the short summer and talk about life as a path where even terrain is ease and steepness is difficulty, light is safety and darkness is danger. What if you see, on your easy descent, a mass of fallen ice balanced just above you in the landslide? What if your path leads gently to the brow of a low hill and you find a dead fox lying in the scrubgrass? It could not catch its prey and starved from the continuous light.

The Heavy Thing

Mel decided
to drag
the great
weight.

She attached
a dirty rope
to pull it through
the pretty yard.

The heavy thing
bumped and tipped
and tore the grass.

Nick! What is this weight?
She called into the house.

Nick was really
standing quite near her.

What is this weight?
She said softly.

They agreed it looked
like an anvil.

Ground,
with all your dirt,
how dare you seem hollow
under this anvil.

Mel said this
in her mind.

Say!
You don't say.
The vireo called.

S-Bahn

The window is nothing but white
and the three of you are looking out
the white window.

(And you know how a buttercup,
when you held it to her chin,
made a little yellow glow?)

Your faces have a yellow glow.
There is no yellow coming from the window.
Yet your faces have a yellow glow.

(On the S-Bahn outside Munich
you passed fields of canola in full flower.
The photo shows your faces
illuminated by yellow but the window
is overexposed and shows nothing;
no field of canola in full flower.)

Fly Over the City

Remember last Wednesday
when we went with Lori in the truck
down to the orchard?

I told Lori that her name means truck,
in the UK,
and she didn't believe me.

You can't remember the orchard
but you say,
that's L-O-R-R-Y.

You take a handkerchief out without unfolding it,
and let it nestle in your hand.
Peace be with you, you say.

I thought it was *Please be with you*
we said in church when everyone shook
hands with everyone all

I tell you that I
got a new job
as a bike courier
with Fly Over the City.

You hand me your juice glass.

Peace be with you, you say again,
to me, to the table, to Lori, to the orchard,
to the handkerchief, to the juice glass,
to fly over the city.

Macaque

They carried a table and chairs outside to eat supper and read in the warm night. After three years, the table is still in the yard. After he died he changed into an animal. He sees her sitting at the bent table. It would have been right to take the table inside or cover it with heavy cloth. In late winter, when the animals are hungry they come closer to the houses. But a monkey has never come so close to the house. This is the third day the macaque has come. He's calm and moves slowly through the deep snow. His coat is silver and tawny and stands out from his chest and his neck in a handsome mane. Although he is thin he is dignified and impressive with a hairless face, his gaze the same as a person. She places a bowl of rice on the table and he takes it quickly, then moves away. She wears a winter coat he doesn't recognize. He knows there are beets in the root cellar and radishes, apples. He holds up the bowl in one hand and with the other he brings the warm rice to his mouth.