

## *Come Moths*

Come moths  
to the sticky triangular tents I have placed  
in the closet, in the pantry, come down  
with your tiny paper wings and brown  
anonymity. Come uncatchable loose flecks  
of the universe, come smudges,  
come floaters in the eye,  
mispunctuated sentences, misappropriated funds.  
Gather into the dark. Let me be free of holes  
in the weave, let me be free even  
of the idea of mistake. Come moths  
to your natural doom and I to mine, for you  
have already eaten through  
what I had chosen to wear, what I had hoped.  
You have made me see the light.  
Now we are together in this, finishing  
each other, pro and con.

## *Wakened by Crows*

In the woods, the sky  
    of our sleep breaking,  
piece by piece. Nothing visible  
    in the leaves but the blackness  
moving gradually off as light  
    starts to ping back its notice.

My father would caw  
    and the crows would answer,  
and he'd stand there like a boy,  
    shit-grin-delighted,  
*caw-caw, caw-caw.*

*This is left, this is left,*  
*of the old life,* is what he heard.

You could see it  
in his eyes. He shot a crow  
    once, for no reason, he said,  
and he cried at its dense black,  
    its perfectly curved beak.

I was a child, listening,  
    waiting to be seen,  
but it was only the calling,  
    and the voice was air,  
and the air was nothing  
    human, and I was standing  
under the pines and hemlocks.

How hard it was,  
this is what I want to say, to wake  
    from that disappearing,  
to answer the old life  
    with this one.

## *It Isn't That You Forget Things*

If you were gauging where they are, you could use the map Enbridge puts out to show how far under Lake Michigan the oil pipeline would go.  
Deep enough to be safe,  
  is the idea,

although you know nothing is safe, and what you hold now will corrode  
and eventually break through.

There is nothing under your bones. Think about that.  
If you go deep, it is all marrow and bone, and then you come out the other side.

When she was in a hurry, my mother would call all her children's names.  
Names also run together as the membrane gets thinner.

When a name finally appears, it is like a trophy. Too late, you come up with  
a mnemonic device. You try to remember a way to remember the device.

When you say the word over and over, it is gradually absorbed like yeast into dough.  
It is not possible to retrieve it. It has become who you are

which is quite complex, if anyone wanted to investigate.  
For example, Lake Michigan-Huron is the same lake,

shallow and narrow at the Straits, and freezes in the winter.  
Ice might remember when it was soft and moved in its multiple ways,

when it could be this lake or that, but that cannot be tested  
in present conditions.

The things I remember are below the level of sorting out.  
                                They are so deep they are like love. Inarticulate,  
thrashing around when they need to speak.

## *Museum*

Streaming-hair woman wanders the hallway  
in flowered nightgown, *Where is my family?*  
*Where is my mother? When will they come?* Led back

to her room again and again. When the body dies slowly,  
the mind lives a museum version.  
When Eisenhower was president everyone had a mother,

Mamie wore her serviceable pearl necklace and  
nobody needed to be gorgeous because  
there was work to do and the pill hadn't been invented

so action and consequence were one,  
and the sidewalk was cracked. Trees  
and houses were huger than they would ever

be again, tadpoles squiggled, and the rest took care  
of itself. I don't know when it was  
that the mighty structures began to live inside me

and I myself became the nation and the wind  
began howling and the gut of the nation  
began rumbling. I will tell you a story:

Once upon a time there were world wars,  
the Korean War, there was McCarthy,  
there was terror and confusion, there was Al Capone,

even, and it seemed that would never end.  
How would it end? It ended  
in newspaper words, gathered like a squirrel's nest

in winter, a blob on a branch so high  
it seemed impossible. Even  
in Eisenhower's time: squirrels. And you wonder

how long the experiment of your life will continue  
while water quivers and wood  
rots and the museum is erected, everything's

explained on a plaque. "Don't be scared,"  
we'd said to each other in the dark,  
but nothing happened except this living.

And Eisenhower, bald, canonical, moved far  
out of reach, and the woman  
wandering the hallway, opening door after door,

is checking to see if America has finally  
come back from its long, long trip.

## *Milkweed*

I love the way milkweeds open their mouths  
to let themselves out, even if they sometimes  
look like they scream against their will.  
I love the way tufts of themselves grab on to  
nearby stalks to keep the neighborhood strong.  
The stalks remain upright  
in spite of their hollowness. Everything is hollow  
in a good way. Everything has finished its job  
and has moved on to the next thing.  
It is all a tangle, as if a mighty wind  
had come through. I can only tell you about this  
from out here. Something has come undone  
in me, maybe it happened centuries ago. My mind  
has run off with the evidence.  
I don't know how to talk about this.  
All I can say is when I see the milkweed in its bliss  
of shedding, I want to hold you to me forever,  
which is the wrong thing. I have somehow  
come undone from the shedding and have wandered off  
into the stories my mind came up with  
to explain why I should live forever.