

What Wandered Away

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What Wandered Away

poems by Kendra Bartell

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I. EVENINGS AND MORNINGS

Please do not touch

She had seen the world
between two
soft-edged L's , touching
at right angles. Small scope.
Years ago. The camera
never turned off or stuffed
into pockets.

*

Her mother, splayed
next to the toilet. Right
palm, upturned—
reaching across the
grubby tile. Fingers perfectly
spaced for another's
to fill.

*

The door of the club swinging
behind her, shut; the man
across the street, drunk;
the fingers, as if combing
her coat, gripped;
her keys, spokes
between knuckles;
glued tight.

*

Trips to the grocery store
often included her tiny fingers
straining against her mother's
clasp. *"Don't eat that,
throw it away!"*

*

She can recount the story of her
naming. The angel in the dream,
the voice of a strawberry
being turned over
in a bowl, the fingers
reflected,
the constellation shaped
from dragon to bear.

*

Her father,
10 and 2 at
the wheel.

*

The surgeon's awkward
wrinkles, pleated palms,
and sighs.

*

She wonders if she's ever truly
held hands with another
body. All she remembers
are grasps, fingers cupped and
shoved into mittens, the
feeling of her own fingers
pressed against each other.

*

The phone rang, her number—
she plucked the cuticles
carefully away from each nail
and listened to her voicemail
while the edges softly throbbed.

*

Her father,
(imagined)
waving at the airport
terminal, her bags
in hand.

*

She studied the hand beside
her—reaching across
the sheets, upturned:
callous under each
knuckle, thick thumb pad,
fingers with just enough
space between to slip
in and fall asleep.

*

Again her mother,
again the sickness,
again the palms slicked
with sweat.

*

At night, she traces
his back with her fingertips
feeling the staccato of their pulses
playing. She wonders if he hears
the beat as background
music to his dreams.

*

She held up the camera
once more and framed
the decrepit house. She
saw her mother
turn the corner of the porch
twenty years younger
and felt somehow
alive. The soft pink frame
held the house
in warmth.

*

Sometimes, she picks up
the phone and listens to the dial tone
buzz on, palm flattened against the receiver.
She feels her mother's
palm on her own skin.

*

Blason

Make do & mend: sew up your skin & do
not say NO. Your face in the mirror in
parallel—one eye winks in pair, seven
millisecond delay of process
Your scar that proves a child's
wonderment, what wandered away.
& fingers, callused from years
of guitar, guilt; neck, cricked from
books & breath. Your breasts, the switched
off silver lining. You have felt
the weight of your hair
as it falls. The blazing & blush,
bloodstream hushed by still skin.
We as humans are just decay: you have yet
to be yourself & still another's.

Language of Serenades

They were two animals yoked together:
irreversible. His left foot ambling to keep pace
with her brisk steps. His puffer cheeks ruddy
against her china glaze skin. Yet he can't
ignore the pull of the chain, its rough iron
rubbing the underprivileged inside of ankles,
their tendons raw to shackles. They,
like the cockroaches, will continue to march
until enough ground has been covered. Enough.
She waits; her own feet anxious to find the
unanswered key, the keeling of another body
tethered to stop. Yoked into one pair,
each a polemic against the other's stride.
You know how it works. One wants to move
forward, the other wishes to transcribe
what's happened on the way. His halting
motions, her smooth sailing. This errand
will never quite tie its end. This awkward shuffle,
this strange quintet: his and her sets of legs,
the ineluctable language of serenades.

On the Injuries of the Head

Pinpoints: pulsating through the soft spot
damned by calcium cross-sections of bone.
Now, breath. Disc added to stacked disc, remnants

of others opened. You stand, all hot
with blood, optimal reverb and one
free flight of mind: the window, resplendent

and open, shining a cross where,
when you look (harder now,) you can see—shaped

—
the echo of a crown, lifting just there—
spoked edges coming to rest on you, gaped.
Ragged and reddening.

This, that, today.

Then to get down in the dark on hands and knees.
Undoing is easier than doing you know—
the unbuttoning of a bra behind the back only
needs one hand, three fingers. Look at me.
Unseeing
only needs closed lids, shades
drawn and a thought
of flying geese in a perfect V. Close your eyes
and you wake up with your eyes crossed
by the flash of daylight. The geese still flap
their wings in formation.

Domed

In this sense of the word:
curved; a natural vault or
cavity; or, a structure
built
to resemble this natural
phenomena.

This becoming, the sea snail
hollowed out and attached,
columella to abdomen.
The calcified chasm being
glued to its
new self.

What of the idea of my body as
being so, being so made
as to be filled within
this opening,
formed
for that purpose.

And yet to be of form,
gossamer on gossamer
ten-thousand tons
strong & yet
pliant.

spun into this shape by
some grand inquisitor—
a spider crafting
his fated
masterpiece.

Skin

First, map yourself onto leaf:
body cellulose and reaching fibrous stalk,
self extending outward, spoked—

Then, turn, inanimate,
all together at one
time the colors blending
to envelope your heartlines up
through tip pointed
the edges rawed to hard monuments.

Now feel the body
consistent in entirety,
a system of interconnections
separate and meaning something
other than a system of belief.

No, rather, the blending
of tender, fear, worry, warmth—the colors
echo to the sea
that bores through in holes
each time repeating

I belong to no one—

I belong to no one—

The Full Moon

Today I am sentient: it took some time
 to remember and nod in silence,
 for I wanted most to think of fields
 fields shadowed at night; fields of the moon awash
 in their own reflections. Today I will
 think only of representation,
 the way light bends at its weakest
 cusp, sweet and difficult. I want
 to look at one complete
 complete thought, the first phase
 of complete beauty,
 pure image in the physical.
 In other words, to eventually rein
 in both body and lyric.
 How can I be in the moment
 made? — I am alive and I know!
 Clothe me
 for I am clothed—
 Today I am awake: the light fragile
 and aware, trembling towards
 and from its source.
 The new full moon
 famous for its elaboration of birth,
 its little bit of inevitable and epic.

II. YES, TELL

Yes, tell.

I.

I know the slight off-blackness of your form:
midnight at the top foot of the staircase.
The dog whines. She's allowed to be vocal.
I wait, shamed, for your diminished return.

I think blankets won't cut it to cover
what the blush of shame reminds me. I want
to whine. When I say whine, I mean to call
you by your name, to have you come when I

call; my voice, my system of gravity.
I know Pluto's want: to be an object
of an ordered & actual system.

The pull & give of validation, yes—
the curved fold of space, part of a warm
& engendered pairing, engulfed in sense.

II.

The body as gendered art: combusting
takes time. Thoughts, tinder. Fingers, flint sparking.
Hours spent holding yourself up before
the mirror, burning holes across each pore.

Limbs, torso, muscle, fat: each its own wronging.
Inches, cups, flimsy, flopping. Belonging
belongs to a certain other of beautiful
woman. She carries selves, what she's able.

The body splits in heat, easy. Enflamed.
Crack yourself open, and gaze inward. See.
Layer your organs over and under.

You will not be able to stand more shame,
but you know how to force the weeping.
You are overfull.

III.

We were supposed to be
something else. Fully rough and rubbed over
with each other's something wholly other.
Edges of sheets tangled in fingers
reaching for something I
can't quite grasp.

My shape refilled. New-filled.
Supple, budding, blossomed.
Feminine in all the right—
What you mean is: flesh to grab.
Hands full but of firmness.
Mouth red and plump with
tongue waiting and silent
to say yes.

IV.

All skin fumes.
All selves womb.

No you without turn of lock.
No you without shatter of mirror.

You remember—all it takes
is a little less of the self and—
and—you wanted to say something but shame,
you wanted to anoint yourself.

Yes, tell.
Yes! You, covered:
You are not a texture
to be explored.

I see you.
I see you also.

V.

Each
time,
the
self
that
went
bump
in
the
night
didn't

remain
hidden.

VI.

Hide enough inside you so you can go back and touch it— I feel it happening and I hurt.
 I have known this innocence no longer. I covered, they became.
 A box and a boy are only a tale apart. I have shoved mine deep within. Do not spill the wish to
 be magical too early, I say.
 I won't be caught dead admitting I'm about to burst into flames.

Surrender for me is hard—
 what is that heat—
you stand on your own two feet—tell me what you know—what do you know about
 fire—grasp—ash—selves—salvation—
 this sense delicious—
you have known this for far too long—

ecstasy of lyres stills me.
 A quite unknown self sits waiting inside,
 but what can I do?

I pick and pick all night,
 turning into nonsense, something else entirely—

VII.

Entire
a delicacy
Piece of machinery
to handle—on fire

in soft focus—a shimmer
of errors framed
excellently and knowing Oh what
I want and see

there you see
Oh only what
Yes I see

I keep myself
held within
I

III. THE OPPORTUNITY OF EXPANSION

[who are you & whom do you love]

what form / what voice / what word
can I use to desensitize it
or to collect a ton of names

for it the need to name a place
origin or perhaps home

yes it is this your first gift
I reject O world

now the dock now rising
the gentle now salt

but the clatter the dog bones the plates
the voices the names the telling the hole

it is much too much & now
it is simple
I will close my eyes
& the mist surrounds

the ferry now grey its ghost
apparition you will touch both
things it doesn't matter
I know the way

fog & vessel move apart
together of course but separately
as particle / wave individually one—
this gesture of half love

what does the hand do in reaching
what can the brain enact in remembering
what could I do in return

*

[where did you come from / how did you arrive]

how do I get empty
these days I imagine it takes
a letter to the open ocean
a kind of desert in itself
barren and burst apart

I have known such rise in me

I have spent the time calculating
it's what you can lift that shapes
where you emerge
the volume of your body moved
incandescence & wound

keep doing this—
what is blooming
can be unfolding

—it will make itself known & felt
the algae alight themselves
under the motion of water just swirled

and yes the ocean made this
fog above itself fixed

I've spent a lot of time with my body
making meaning

this way

*

[what is the shape of your body]

I am a brutally soft woman
 unlike the spider I produce no
 steel no solid segmented carapace
 to speak of

instead the days are these
 the press of skin versus ligament
 & breath too heavy to be
 full lunged & tasted
 the ache of arch forced
 to flex in full
 the skin yes rubbed & fleshed
 whole-budded in sense

I would wrap myself
 in the opaque fog and
 dissolve
 permeable and susceptible
 overflow & fullness

I would displace the atoms
 equal to me and no other
 shape
 the limbs flimsy
 walking to shore

this tired engine of doing
 my own small being
 of yes
 undone

*

[describe a morning without fear]

What is sustainable
the sound of the rough
deer breath their
stiff exhales
shake the ribs

What is familiar
this rumble
in your chest &
check to see you're still
bone & ligament
alone

What is offered out
a modulated wave one
ascending your skin
into the cemented dock

What is vulnerable
brine in twilight
O you welcome
this body
undone
to shimmer

*

[how will you live now]

We are at a lime kiln & I feel the heat flush
my skin warmer. I will live as a sunbeam.

I will reject the feelings
of being the only one / the crepuscular ray solitary

making my way through the world. I will be light
& empty & full of association.

If it pleases me I will dip myself
into the cool ripples & push the kelp away

with my strength. It does not help me
further myself through the land

but I do not dismay. I will perch on the edge
of this ridge & take notes on the jellyfish that float—

the waves their body made momentous
& spread—radial crest, tentacle divet.

Maybe I will instead live as a tugboat
giant mechanical motors pulling

a pile of earth across the Sound.
Its raised mounds of dirt ferried gingerly

by a structure of load bearing weight—
beams, crossbeams, beams

*

[who was responsible for the suffering of your mother]

These were your dreams then:
 the coating of honey
 across around
 your fingers pressing

 the excess air out

 the desire to eat
 crunchy things the reminder
 of bone & yes
 anyone's hands

I lick my fingers to taste
 the more the all

awe & destructiveness
 O I do it too in my own way
 and you your dream
 of ruining your house & more

if you could please describe an instance
 where salt was mistaken for sugar

or perhaps a 900 x 300 ft. pile
 of bones and clam shells split

listen the rustle in the wind there that's me
 yes wonderful

*

[what do you remember about the earth]

I'm yes a bit older now
 cells will only take so much abuse

when I say abuse I mean

in the heavy way
 of tiredness in the motion

of allowing things to permeate
 & be inside

this is a place I will go to reject the voices light
 and force & instead measure the space of silence

the silence of a wave cresting at the edge
 of horizon
 or the gentle change of black to gleam
 & foaming

or the silence of the spider's strengthened luxury
 I believe the stories of fairies in trees

now their golden sheen that flashes
 unrepentant & unashamed

flitting around the air

above me the pines coat their bark in yellow
 & strip themselves of needles

there is a wave
 divisible by two
 here

*

[tell me what you know about dismemberment]

this the motion of the wave against brine buoyed.
this the light motion of wave. this wave against
brine. bring buoy. this motion. buoy brined.
be motion. this light.

light the body then let us touch it.
I seldom wear it. let light touch I.
this body I then light. the I then touch.
I seldom touch light. then wear us.
I seldom body.

*

[what are the consequences of silence]

it has been a long time coming

this ferry across & us

stationed, we together bask

our faces upturned in the radiated

glow the empty belly

groans & the corners of our mouths

too just lift –

*

[and what would you say, if you could]

I won't tell anyone but I will tell

this pretty substantial circle
I found

a circle around another
the tiny pines years
old & surrounding

this home to be a protective
layer of mist

and therefore encasing
this as new

a reverse building
me up out of myself
the wood chips soft and pliant
—yes, much like this
my body,
this place—

standing on their edges
thin & supple waiting as if
to grow or perhaps settle
here

this layer of grey flannel
filling the air old
as the forest & in a way
the self—the vapor
displacing / replacing
me into myself
somehow
together

*

[how will you begin]

Because some of you don't have a history here
the fog becomes your luxury
wonderful rich
O grey openness—
your sheen opalescent
blurring the distinct
out of you, the dry golden grass that yesterday
crunched beneath you, the just under
ripe blackberry on your tongue.
Close your eyes & count the lavender.
Part your lips & feel the breath
lavender its buds lavender
its stems the unruly roots all lavender.
You see the glints in the air now.
Because there is no difference North
or East the fog is
& you will be too.
Because this border that is undesired is
your body you must take it off
& refract

*

[how will you prepare for death]

this body is a ghost factory it takes one lifetime of
 body to produce one ghost transmuting air
 bone caverns into itself a self if the
 forest is seen for the trees if the trees are found if
 the fog surrounds body into air grey & blurred
 yes this my body a cliff a two- toned
 resonance of self or shape one
 body must respond to its own needs even fully
 then leave this I will myself to be
 breath breathed into the fog's swirl
 I will the self to move

*

IV. WHAT WANDERED AWAY

*As if to avoid capture, we have begun
to dig our own holes.*

*In this way we are the same as
ourselves.*

Interchange

Winter: I to You

Can you write your name down without apology?
I will give you the keys and codes—

there are two shadows leaning against a wall, remember?
See how they pitch and swerve,
this jumble of limbs. Remember this compactness
of form, this centering.

You are unsure. You
live in this moment of monument
and feel the air around you shift
to hold a new formation.

Can you state the first letter
of capture? Of invariance?

If you stand in the center of the house
and hear mother weeping,
be firm. Open the door.

If you accept this,
my message,

I will see you in my own name.

Network of Learning

Mother argued with herself
 over where to re-place the bed
 carted up from the basement;
 the caved center a comfort now.

Father took the stately Queen-sized fortress,
 its buttresses of solid oak
 guarding against the shuddering drafts,
 shades' clatter in an unfamiliar room.

I step foot inside my old room
 and the emptiness, still—
 a creature hungry
 to hold the body's warmth.

My bag remains unpacked, pushed
 against the stark walls, photos removed.
 The air mattress cannot cradle
 my sharp hip and I won't sleep soundly here.

She starts to count all over
 the house: pills, cups left emptied,
 clumps of hair knotted
 and under the couch, the bank
 statements left unopened.

He adds up his list:
 glasses to straighten, windows
 to seal, floors to polish
 and then rescuff.

I do it too, though,
 my own collection of resonance:
 the turning signal clicking in the car,
 rice sticky and cold
 on my dinner plate, listening to my breath
 fill the bare room, the creature
 anxious to heat itself with my quiet.

This record. This collection
 of words. This monument.

Independent Regions

In the waking of spring I smell this—
acid burning of coffee for her crusted cup,
small sense of tea leaves unfurling in his glass,
a brief inhale between.

In one flutter of eye the day's
suffering realized, before its rays could even graze us.

In nature, so inside walls—my steps have begun to fall
lighter
to avoid the predators.

Four-Story Limit

To you, a small offering.

Step one: allow for daydream,
and if it is to shatter,
don't think you need
to turn on the light for cover.

The stairs will climb themselves
and you can follow one after another,
upwards & opening.

A coincidence—
the color of the carpet will match
your cuticles, picked and bit—
a nervous habit
that becomes gone in time.

Step two: remember
soon you will be me, moved and removed.
Your fingerprints only dust
on the banister.

The stairs may creak in your new city,
but don't think of it as distraction
from any weeping above—
there it will be comfort,
space for you to exhale as well.

Step three: count
their cigarettes ashed in full
and the smoke cursed into
unspoken air.

There will be words you do not
comprehend yet, but feel.

Step four: allow the moment
to smolder
but do not wait
to cauterize the edges.

Paths and Goals

Unlearning each thing I am untying my shoes. The knots unwind and become loose in my hands. Slight and tense. Unlearning each thing. The placement matters and I lift one foot out and then set it down. The next foot follows but the feeling matters in the lifting. The air beneath. This is a silence counted. This is counting. Unlearning each thing I am untied and still placed. I am still. The I added in two columns. The feeling matters. The feeling of being two is like being the air between a knot and itself. And waiting I am following this next and this counts too. Unlearning this thing. Unlearning this I am counted. Too.

Access to Water

this heat is a newness inherent
a heat that sets back sight
into layers of waved air wound

tight into itself, a cloud
latticed closer and closer

while the poppy sheds its petals but remains
upright, the domed stigmatic disc
alone and exploded

Scattered Work

Outside, I see the starlings shiver their wings
in murmur and shimmer
as I walk in dampened leaves.

Their feathers shifting
 silent and unending
 and together.

In the shadows I cannot tell
the gleam off their bodies
from the planes humming above.

They will not stop their leaving.

This flight, the impermanence. What relief.

Density Rings

In the moment that you received the call, did you cry?

Did your feet take you outside into the calm air that was too forcefully shoving itself into your lungs?

Can you remember the words?

Could you feel the fricatives or were they too carried away?

In that moment, was there an intimacy between you and the earth, the dirt poked through with new grass, sprawled?

If I put a pen in your hand, could you write yourself a letter with instructions to buttress a wall of your own fierce fear?

If there is no way to articulate the structure, will the words, their shape, their spines, loosen?

If there were a leak, will you know the chemistry of epoxy?

What if the first moment is never ending?

Eccentric Nucleus

To you, to remember:

*Once, father woke me in the middle of the night
and told me it was time to do the dishes.*

*I pulled the rubber gloves up to my armpits
and stepped into the sink.*

*Again and again and again I stepped
into the soaped water and still*

I could not find plate, bowl, spoon—

*Once, our dog woke in the middle of the night
sensing a ripeness*

and stepped gingerly onto the stairs,

hind legs still numbed

and rattled his bones down the flight

one leg on another

shaking the house—

Once, I put my fingers on the keys

of the piano and pressed down

if only to stop the bleeding—

Degrees of Publicness

But before
 a Saturday
 the drinks
 and drinking
 and the drinks.

My mother's stories told too
 often in a row, in this moment
 repeated and wrapped,
 tears and misremembering,
 the ice clinking.

The echoes of her
 life before mine:
 boxes full older
 than my own body
 and hauled across country.

The desert then
 a clean slate
 of mesa sunrises
 and shadow dogs
 the dance only between
 themselves—

Here, now:
 the ice is melting against the glass and
 I am just my one pair of eyes—

 the boxes only beginning
 to peel their edges back—

the drinks have been drunk
 and will be again
 and I will sleep
 learning the ways to spell
 daughter
 in two halves.

Morning & welcoming too the sighs of the clouds,
 yes, her careful lines crafted by hard earned
 smiles, hard worn callused hands—these too

can support my hands
 the same thin fingers
 as mine, my too-tight grip on the wheel, hers.

I wonder: how

do I even say hello, or agree,
or drink water, or be useful.

Birth Places

But in stillness — stilled—
 stilted the blood
 —a collision

of two —
 parts too

the bloom—this
 I was frightened—

& the blood
 called
 —to its other

I remained still
 —
 but the drive
 belligerent
 & inside

rent— the blood
 divided
 & conquered

one half
 —has to
 take
 more

Quiet Backs

How to build a house (with pictures):

I cut into the wall
and a weep hole
blooms in the wood,

the efflorescence
a shading
of tears on the brick.

The gentle white shadow
melting into hardness:
her weeping.

I cannot live
the way I live.

Holy Ground

In the beginning there was a sense of wrapped up tightness and a quiet *wait* before lips were pursed and syllables parsed. The cooing. The *mmmming* and even the pushing of hair off of forehead. In this order: a life together, playpen and dog in the yard. Ceremony surrounded by moving boxes, a tiny necklace for me to match. Truck packed and hitched, shifted. Another dog. In the woods there was a word for safety that didn't involve biting my lip at all. There was no need for fences. There was the swoop of the hawk overhead and a stiffness in the air the dogs had sensed and bristled at. "There was always a way he spoke." "I don't know what she expected." "You will always be our daughter." There was a new garden and posts placed to mark our territory, there. A monitor, a guard stone. The five foot way of terrace and garden, the finality in a cultivation of herbs. The poppies kept blooming despite drought, each summer the blood orange petals littering my steps. In this way there was a moment of silence. In this time there was a setback, yes, but it was not a hole in the yard with its own gravity, yet. There were years and years and if I look back with my eyes closed I can almost find the expected happiness. There is a safe padding in this distance, time. I have wounded and wound myself with it. In this remembrance I will find hands and knees skinned, no roots. And yes, there were evenings and there were mornings, but always the sky hung over us and we did not catch our own shadows calling to themselves, wishing for some sort of cover for the fallout to come.

Positive Outdoor Space

To you, remember again:

*And after the crash, a stillness—
your hands, upturned—*

*the bike's wheel still spinning
and the spokes striking nothing,*

*not even the gravel beneath.
You could have composed*

*a symphony to that silence.
The blood dirtying itself*

*around rocks lodged deep
within the lines of your hands—*

*I want to show you how
not to need. Their footsteps,*

*father's hands rushing to pull you up and away
but you, still, stared— the gravel,*

an imprint of the arc of your palm—

Radiant Heat

Underneath the bloomed sky
the house remains
itself. The bricks yawn
open against the morning
and bits of leaf
swirl, this last hum of fall.

From time to time there will be
the sound of a bird landing
its wired feet against roof,

and in those moments
there is reverence, breath.

Excuse me, forgive me—
I can't cover my shame.

Common Land

Hands in their yellow rubber, my fingers
grip the slip of silver and soap.

Years before, this had been mother's marker
of femininity, this desire to scrub.

The clink of glassware the only reminder
of discussion, critique, want.

She had always washed with such ferocity—
her lips a solid ledge, knuckles

rigid and primed to snap.
'There is a way to learn

from lines drawn in the sand. Now,
I turn up the radio and sway my hips,

sing to the slosh of water against sink,
suds dripping down the drain.

When all the blame is spread out on the table,
none exists.

Numbers of Stories

A selection of reasons for you to choose from:

1. We have time to make this right.
2. Things die in the vault. To live in the cellar is to carry yourself out.
3. The furniture doesn't matter. The furniture is inconsequential if you can't see that furniture means money and the lack of money selflessness on the part of us all, and selflessness means carving monuments inside ourselves to what is not there. All this can be bought in stores, packed and swathed to keep from breaking, and still we end up in our homes, shambles.
4. We don't have to take things to extremes. I will still come around the house, make sure the nuts and bolts are taken care of. I can still provide this.
5. There will be no more marvelous natures in underground places.
6. What among us can be preserved. If you peel away these letters, there will not be glistening.
7. The flower is always in your hands.

Good Materials

For you, another small offering:

Here is the eyelash fallen from my blink.

*Here is the moment of reflex tears, the swell
and pitch of cleansing toxicity. What will the empty
creature carry out today? Take this and go—*

I think there is time left to pick up

the phone. There is time left

for my finger to hover.

Here, my hesitation a gift,

a bouquet fragrant and faltering

before your feet.

Light on Two Sides of Every Room

Morning slowly unbuttons itself here
as I roll over in bed. In its warming
I hear nothing, the absence an envelope
of intimacy. The phone will not ring
today and my edges will remain defined.
I remember where I put the bowl of sugar,
how to fold my own laundry,
the pitch and wave of my own shadow.
I know, now—who put me together
can't help but take me apart.

Intimacy Gradient

When water freezes, the molecules take definite position
in relationship to one another:

In this way snowflakes too
are made

There is a hole you cannot fill

Windows Overlooking Life

To dig is to bury anew. To dig is to bury a new. Newness. A new knowing, known. The digging is an uncovering of earth, of new earth below the old. The older buries itself below. I caught up with myself here and there is dirt edging itself into my fingers. The dug dirt is fumbled into a small hill, itself a unit. The dug the dirge the dire. The need. I do this of myself. For. The bulb in my hand unpapers, unwraps. There may be too much, it films between my fingers. There is hope in this motion. To bury. The dirge. I drop it, the bulb, its beginning. It will not enflame for months, the petals shuddering into the breeze of new spring. My shudder, a step across my grave. I will be here when the poppy flowers, dies, its stigma my deliberate grace—how else to describe the delicate unfurling of seeds into earth, waiting—

Notes

Section titles within “The Opportunity of Expansion” excerpted from Bhanu Kapil’s *The Vertical Interrogation of Strangers*.

Poem titles within section IV. “What Wandered Away” pulled from *A Pattern Language*, by Sara Ishikawa, Christopher Alexander, and Murray Silverstein.