

HEDGE DAYS—1981-1994

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HEDGE DAYS—1981-1994

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THESIS ABSTRACT

HEDGE DAYS—1981-1994

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This thesis is a collection of thirty-two poems preceded by an introduction. The introduction explores my use of myth as a way to craft a dynamic, evocative style; it also analyzes my “mythmaking” as a way of creating distance between me and the autobiographic material in my writing. The collection documents fundamental experiences of childhood, real and imagined, and draws on various mythic traditions as a loose framework; these poems are an attempt to capture those strange and crucial moments when a child’s consciousness crosses into the realm of dream and symbol.

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My Myths

I want to create poems that are more dynamic in style and subject than my past work. I have had a tendency in the past to be literal and safe with poems about butterflies, caution signs, photographs: very American, spare, “thing” poems. They were safe because they were arbitrary and unchallenging. I feel comfortable writing from observed, static objects, and I find it difficult to write in an evocative way about people or situations I am emotionally close to. With this thesis collection, I have tried to push my writing past the static and planned and to allow my impulse and intuition more control over my poems. To do this, I created a framework of rules, a kind of game, to guide my writing.

My first rule was that I would write about my family history. I decided to write about my family and my childhood because for me these topics are very challenging. In *The Poet's Companion*, Kim Addonizio and Dorianne Laux say that the family is a microcosm of the human world; it is through our earliest relationships with family that we learn about the nature of “intimacy and distance, anger and joy, cruelty and kindness, isolation and community” (30). I would expand on Addonizio’s and Laux’s ideas about the lessons of family to include the themes of creation, destruction, living, and dying.

These themes are matters of myth. The next rule was developed from this idea; I decided to think about my composition process as a process of telling myths. My personal myths are not *mythtelling* in the sense that Sean Kane would define it, as a sort

of intuitive dialogue between man and nature (15). They are not grand or epic, as in the traditions of the Greek, Roman, Nordic, or Celtic cultures. My poems don't explain *the* world, or even one cultural concept of the world; what I have written attempts to explain one child's world.

When I was young, the world was a vivid and fascinating place; the boundaries between what I saw, what I felt, and what I imagined were fluid. As a very small child, I had no words for the things I experienced and absorbed. Instead, I *dreamed* terrible things—snakes and tornadoes and flying and falling. In a way, this collection of poems tries to approximate those dreams; they are another indirect translation of the thoughts of that wordless observer-child.

It was important to me to try to convey a certain unnerving vision of childhood; for me, and I suspect for many children, childhood did not conform to the modern model many think it is supposed to follow. In "Little Angels, Little Monsters," Marina Warner notes that "the nostalgic worship of childhood innocence [. . .] is more marked today than it ever has been," and there is a definite "belief that there's a proper childlike way for children to behave" in our culture (45). I certainly agree with the modern cult of childhood that children are special, perhaps supernatural, but I have trouble compromising the ideal of childlike innocence with the strangely brutal actions of children; innocence is not necessarily a synonym for goodness. Warner says that children's "observable, active fantasy life, their fluid make-believe play seem to give them access to a world of wisdom, and this in turn brings them close to myth and fairy tale" (49). She goes on to affirm that children are closer to the grotesque and violent in myth and fairy tale than we would like to admit: children have "never been seen as such a

menacing enemy as today [. . .] with all the power of projected monstrosity to excite repulsion [. . .] even terror” (56).

My decision to treat my early life as a sort of prehistory-of-myself, to claim my experiences as supernatural and mythic, gave me room to create symbols, as opposed to simply recording or interpreting them. With this freedom, I could write about my dog’s death as a ritual sacrifice, or my mother’s insomnia as a symptom of godhood. I began to think about what I created in a very different way, and my poems became more open and wild. Re-visioning childhood as a mythic world also helped distance me from its characters—my family—in a productive way. Because I was telling “myths,” I could speak about emotional relationships and events from a position of relative neutrality. Because I was telling myths, I could also create the most outrageous images I could imagine.

My next rule was that my source stories and experiences had to be old enough that exact, cinematic recall of them would be impossible. The more fragmented the memory, the better; stories passed from family member to family member were excellent sources for my myth poems, because their details had already been greatly revised in the telling and retelling. The reason guiding my choice of source material was that I wanted to encourage my intuitive mind; I wanted to move past the literal sense of the stories and begin making myth.

Setting out to write myths encouraged me to appropriate various techniques of what Kane would call “literary” versions of myth (15). In some poems, I tried to approximate an oral style and directly address my audience. For example, in “Giants” I opened with the suggestion of a listening, possibly collaborating audience: “Let’s try it

this way.” In other poems, I opened with deliberately ambiguous phrases of time to create a feeling of timelessness and cyclical iteration—“Before, when the world had no edge” (“Miracle”), “At the end of the summer” (“Dad quits smoking again”), “In January” (“Ghost in the machine”). Throughout the collection, people become natural phenomena; in “Giants,” my father is “flight / and gravity.” I also write the reverse, natural phenomena becoming people, in “Satellites,” where stars and meteorites become human (and very normal) when they fall to earth.

Just as the “mythtelling in which relationships in nature were encoded has dwindled down to [. . .] superstition” and anecdote (Kane 41), so my myths began to give way to ghost stories and folk tales over the course of my project. In the poem “Godlings of Alabama,” I wanted to describe the feelings of territoriality I had as a child. When other children were thrown into my domain, I sought control by outdoing them in a ghost-story-telling contest. “Storm Rules” borrows a bit of its style from folkloric “weather” sayings (like my family’s saying that cows lying down means either “rain” or “the fish are biting,” and the Welsh belief that tall weeds in fall mean a hard winter (Coffin and Cohen, 113-4)).

The most difficult part of this game was following my last rule; I decided that I needed to change certain aspects about the way I controlled my writing. I can see from reading some of my older poems that in the beginning, I was too indulgent with my poems, letting them grow out like weeds with each revision; once I began taking workshop-style classes as an undergraduate, I began to control this tendency by slashing, burning, and staking my words. I can be a vicious and compulsive editor, which has some benefits and some very serious drawbacks. Since the initial impulse for the

collection was to do try things that I have not done, or things I have not done successfully, I decided that loosening my grip (without losing control) was a necessity.

In “Psychopomp,” for example, I experimented with blank space, which I haven’t tried in the past. In the poem, cats leave a room after a death, “following an invisible”—I deliberately left out the final word and punctuation mark at the end of this stanza. The effect is a superstitious pause, a literal loss of words stemming from the idea of death. While drafting the poem, I may have even intended to fill in the blank once I discovered the correct word for what leaves the room after a person dies. Leaving the blank makes the reader’s search for an answer, leaves them silently tracing the path of the cat that traces the path of the dead and disappears.

Many poems in my collection deal with death, reality, and the imagination. Many more explore the contrast between images of pain, disorder, and ugliness, and images of joy, control, and loveliness. Because of these themes in my own work, I turned to Anna Akhmatova, Paul Celan, and Gary Snyder for guidance. They were my greatest poetic influences for this collection because I trust them as poets; their works reveal a perspective on the world that I find simultaneously starkly realistic and admirably magical. I turned to Akhmatova and Celan for inspiration about how to write effective, not-confessional pieces about intense personal experiences. Many of Akhmatova’s and Celan’s poems were written after (or long after) the events they refer to, but their retellings of the past attempt to capture and refine the essence of what *was*. Part of putting a history into writing is to make it what *is*; these poets reshape history and build myth through language in ways I have tried to emulate. I admire the way Akhmatova’s language whirls and dances and sinks with outrage and grief. By presenting her readers

with commonly held symbols and archetypal characters of loss, she invites us to hurt with them, and only tells us the strict truth when that version of events is the one which will pierce deepest. Celan does not invite us into his suffering in the same way; he builds a strange alternate world that can contain immense, incomprehensible pain in fantastic and eerily beautiful forms.

Snyder's influence on my own poetry is different than the influences of Akhmatova and Celan. I read Snyder for his calmer, more matter-of-fact use of myth; instead of creating *new* myth, he situates his writing as part of (and a bridge between) existing mythic traditions. His logging poems weave through the Pacific Northwest world of Bear and Coyote and Seal. Most of his poems have a meditative simplicity and humor that captures the graceful style of the Zen Buddhist philosophies he embraces. For Snyder, it is not just the major events of life that become mythic poetry. These qualities of Snyder's writing were encouraging to me; I wanted to create a body of stories within a set of diverse mythic traditions, and my source material was nothing spectacular to begin with. His irreverent/reverent mix of the ordinary and the transcendent reassured me that what I was trying for was attainable.

When I began this project, I wasn't worried about the problems of creating myths out of my family stories—that aspect of the poems seemed like it wouldn't take as much work as it ultimately required. Instead, I feared being unable to write a series of poems guided by a set theme. Because of this anxiety, I came up with all sorts of schemes and plans to convince myself it was possible to write a unified collection; I ended up not needing or heeding most of these tricks. What worked was reading my inspiration-poets, thinking about “myth” and storytelling, and temporarily killing my inner editor (at least

until the words got themselves out on paper). I feel that I have done what I set out to do with this thesis collection of poems: I followed my rules, and the poems are more or less coherent and recognizably linked. Creating *Hedge Days* was very challenging for me, and I'm pleased that I didn't back down. I'm surprised and gratified by what I've written—it really is different, just as I wanted.

Giants

Let's try it this way—
my mother was a guerilla
before I was born.

My father was abandoned
and raised by pigs.
They made him spin lint into thread
late into the night.

Mom pushed the button
that blew up the moon.
She is the demon of dreaming.

Dad is flight
and gravity, throwing
endless arcs of children
up and out from Olympus.

Incarnation

Parents always suspect magic.

When I was too small to walk

I swam. Tossed underwater, from god's hands

to god's hands

pink and unbubbling, slick as rubber

I was the miracle of breath-holding.

Birth of the Gods

Daniel and Tyslon

My brothers, twins.

Dark and light.

Short and tall.

Wine and whiskey

hidden in a dented car.

Caroline

My sister was born to gypsies

sold to Kmart in a coffee pot box

bought as a blue light special

next to the TVs. She sees things.

Natalie

I was ancient; when I was born

I stood up and shook my father's hand.

**Mama Called the Doctor;
the Doctor Said**

One of the babies didn't survive.

Mom spends time hunting dreams,
keeping the moon
in one piece
and the fire in the dead stove at bay.

The live children
spook her, more than the ghost
of her first. She searches their pockets
checks their eyes for splinters.
She holds their charred bones
out to them over breakfast.

Sibling Rivalry

Before Daniel was born,

I was a god

calling forth penguins

to ride in my pockets.

I hated him first, then Caroline, too.

I became a tiny devil

eating their plums, feeding them carrots

winding their mobiles until they twanged.

I taught them terror: snakes in the stairwell,

monsters in the toilet.

I tipped their chairs backward to make them scream,

dropping them fast, catching them before the floor.

They loved me.

Godlings of Alabama

On grey days, unexpected,
the godlings of Alabama
would show up in swimming trunks
sourfaced, shy, freckled,
impatient to jump off the diving board.
Rusty and Dusty and Buck.

They always told stories,
because they were born in a campfire.
Bloody bones on the first step.
Green Eyes. Soap Sally.

So I told them about Sam,
the kid who drowned in the deep end;
he was only twelve. You can see
his shadow at night.
Sometimes he grabs your feet.

Water Jesus

Daniel was the king of the river—

slick rocks, sunken rafts—

he hid in the sand at night, up to his eyes

in tree roots and snakeholes.

Daniel hunted turtles in the morning,

crawling through the kudzu and mud.

At eight, he brought a mudbug

back to life, called it Humbly.

It clicked as its clumsy feet danced it across the table.

Mom had Humbly buried in a dish

of congealing butter.

When he turned seventeen,

he spent all his time at Little River Canyon

where the rednecks go to drink and break their legs

jumping from cliffs. He went over the falls

to save a woman; she bobbed up out of the whitewater

like a twig, unharmed. Daniel stayed down,

pressed to the bedrock, sucked airless

by the cold vacuum of the river.

After three minutes he rose,
met a hard-faced woman who thought he was dead.
Daniel told her to fuck herself.

Man in the Masks

Daniel has been the Easter Bunny
passing out rubber bands and styrofoam
and bags of rice
in Mickey Mouse shorts and a rasta cap.

He was Moses, with a wrinkled latex face
and a shock of white acrylic hair,
yelling “who wants to watch
me be sacrilegious to Dad?”

He walked through the neighborhood
booming “I am God
hallowed be *my* name.”

He’s not a prankster, not exactly
a liar. Maybe
he’s the namer of types—
Bighead, Streetfighter,
Them Cheddar Boys.

What We Create

Oppositional Defiant Disorder

Daniel wrote a story about how good
he was, how the neighbors called him Angel Boy,
gave him cookies.

A Christmas story. He added that he was the first *real* son,
that he loved fishing. Then he framed it in noodles
and beans, turned the whole thing to gold.

Daniel drew a picture: Mom was a troll queen,
Dad was a Russian circus bear. The slouchy bear:
“Should we go sass the boy?” The three-fanged troll:
“No. We’ll go to his room and touch all his stuff.”

Attention Deficit Disorder

Caroline told us the story
about how black holes came to be
in Wisconsin. “Once upon a time
an evil teacher made me write a fable...”
She got a D in the class for being too wise.
She always wrote behind secret eyes:

the story of how I taught her misspelled words,
the story of how Daniel locked her in the bathroom.

Conduct Disorder

Tyson could draw ninjas and cars better than any kid,
with shading and perspective and proportion. He could
do backflips off the front porch and jackknives off the diving board.

My new brother had mean friends.
He stole things, but he taught us
to light fires in the sink:
toilet paper rolls, cheap army men, Barbie
torched with flaming hairspray. He poured
isopropyl alcohol into his palm and lit it.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

I learned to write between tying my shoes
and refusing to sleep.

I wrote a book about Spot,
the best, most loved puppy, who dies
on every page. Quicksand like grass,
pretty poison-flowers, fat evil bees

lurking.

Gatherers

Hedge days

hiding in the boxwoods by the river in August

sledding down snowless hills on skateboards

and plastic trays, leaving tracks

in the monkey grass.

We played filthy games—

attic refugees, ditchwater gypsies

soldiers in foxholes of dense orange clay.

We stole food for our Ziplocs

wove cloth from the neighbor's daffodils

pulled their clovers to spice our stews.

Then the older games, hunting,

building homes, finding water

our neon canteens rattling at our hips

as we roamed from schoolyard to park,

checking fountains and dead spigots for dust,

anything but echoing rings

of empty pipes

for cool, even hot water

to cut the summer salt.

Storm Rules

When you see the heat lightning,
pretend you can't. Mom will pull you out
of the pool.

But thunder throws you out of the water
like you're already electrocuted—try it. You can't
stay in, twitching and leaping to get to the ladder
the sun suddenly gone under the bruise of a storm.

They say thunderstorms can get in,
close the doors, paint them blue,
pull the windows to, don't touch the taps.
No mirrors, no phone, no TV and
stay off the porch.

We break the rules
open doors to catch the new air, the cool
air pushes out dog hair and fleas and the smell
of hot kitchen, June-grease
and we open windows,

we walk on the porch and feel the spray, slip
on the standing puddles
watch the potted begonias swing from the balcony.

When the windchimes ring with a slam
and the screen doors bubble with gray rainwater
we jump at the thunder, count the miles
between lightning and house

Count the seconds
one onehundred
two mississippi
three hippopotamus...

Between Worlds

I

Blue flash:

grownups never see

it, only us,

only late spring

only early summer, when the

house stays sunlit late—

so late we forget to turn on the

lights and the air turns

lemon and full of green shadow.

Then the blue flash:

always in the room you're not in

always late spring, you chase it

wait for it around nine

it startles

sends you running.

What is it only children

see, what is blue and flashes

like electricity, like indoor-lightning

in summer

in late spring?

II

Children.

It's because we are so close

to death

that we see the ghosts.

We are so thin-

skin glowing,

so fragile,

that the blue lights flash,

call to us

from darkened rooms.

The electric summer buzz

and click of cicadas and frogs

lures us into dreams

into creeping at night—

sleepwalking toward the river.

III

Electricity is a lonely thing,

drawn to children.

Psychopomp

Writing down the family is
impossible.

You'll never believe me if I say my mother
has seen two thousand people die
one by one, held their hands
seen the cats leave the room
following an invisible

She's a minor god
a local crossroads witch of death.
She knows the old
diseases.

Insomnia and Her Children

The problem with Marsha's dreams

has always been that they are too real. At six

she killed Kennedy

blew Shirley Temple kisses to missiles.

She strung everyone in her hometown on meat hooks,

ate their eyes like penny candy,

walked her baby sisters to the municipal pool.

The problem is she can see it all, even waking.

Klansmen beat Tyslon into black sand, addicts

steal Daniel's face with razors, silent cars

steal her daughters. At night, the house burns in its empty field

and she walks along the cotton mill tracks,

covered with crows and teeth,

carrying her husband's hands.

Birds in the House

I

My great-granny killed thousands
of birds in her life, sweetly
throwing them salty dough.

She said a bird in the house
meant death in the family.

So Mom said it too,
even when Granny died in our house
and there were no birds. I think
they were afraid of her.

II

There was the dim, female cardinal
five years after Granny died
slamming frantically at the picture window
the stairwell's high stained glass
with a small sound, *tok tok...*
A male bird, brighter red, zoomed past every hour
chased her away—

she always came back.

That was a year before Dad's first

thallium stress test.

Made Mom nervous,

how bad that bird wanted in the house.

Made me sad, how

she kept beating her skull on the glass.

Witch Ways

Mom's not a great witch
like my great-granny. And me--
I'm not anything.
Granny could powder a mud-dauber nest and cure
a baby's ass of rash in minutes
while Mom was still
on hold with the doctor and I was still
the one in diapers, allergic to everything but goat's milk.
She grew better plants than any woman
and kept ancient black and red dried peppers
and matches in a hundred drawers.
She could see gnomes, too,
which Mom and I can never do—
we're not witches yet, Mom just feels
ghosts and sees seconds ahead in time,
sees the other side.
But I'm blind and blackthumbed.
I make small children and animals uncertain
when I smile.
Even Caroline,
the baby, has more magic than me

she sees people who aren't there
and talks in her sleep.

Nurture

I

Lost children find the house.

Mom and Dad

feed them, wash their clothes,

make them do homework.

They whisper about their real parents,

watch the fairy foundlings wither, wonder

how to save them.

II

Mom was always sick as a child--

Nana fed her Karo syrup and tobacco juice.

But Granny saved her from fever,

dropped her in a giant saucepot of icewater.

At five, Mom was raising Nana's babies—

midnight feedings,

cloth diapers...

They grew up on Tang and mayonnaise sandwiches

because she didn't know any better. Granny sent

vegetables when she could.

III

Granny's son was dying of phlegm in the windpipe

too thick to breathe in, too thick to cough out.

She did what you did, back then,

grabbed his ankles

flung him around in great circles

until the death flew out.

Dad Quits Smoking Again

At the end of summer
storms get nasty,
the chimes ring and fall—
some bucket of dirt with dead stalks
rolls down the street
and the gutters fill with cold, oily water.
It's lovely and mean
the doors are open,
your father cusses the cats.
The dogs cower in the laundry room
and chew the electrical cords.

Satellites

I

Stars fall from the sky
sit on our porch once a year, twice a season
three times a month. I used to get
excited,

comets!

But they're only ever passing by.

II

Some are the kind you feed,
seeds in a stone dish on the lawn
fresh water in an iron bath...

Some bring food, far off
skysugar, moonrocks.

Some bring babies
bright beeping orbiters
flying up and down stairs

splashing in the tub
thrilled by light switches.

III

They are not frozen metal trash
fiery gas in blackness.
They're manmade,
the ghosts of legend, the stars
of last year.

Some have crooked teeth
and drive minivans and like to laugh
and we put them in the sky
because we like it when they return,
burning.

The House on River Avenue

Nobody will believe me.

The homestead has ghosts

who break all the clocks.

When I say time runs like still water

like heavy clouds

at our house, I mean

hours are the same, but nobody notices.

The house smells like old leaves

and heavy Sunday breakfast—

If I ever think of leaving,

the afternoon stretches out like melting glass

and the sun passes his bright mask

to dusk.

This is where ladybugs come to die.

House geckos cling to windowsills all winter,

fossil-grey, dry and soft as leaves, rising like spring.

This is the house where dogs live eons and

porch cats are reborn endlessly, black and gold

black and gold.

The house steals my purse, hides my shoes
places my keys on a pillow
in my old, yellow bedroom.

Soul Food

We have rotten luck.

On just one visit—the AC broke,
the host hid us, the busboy tripped,
sprayed dishwater, the server
dumped Coke into Dad's lap
then punched him.

We don't know why; we tip,
we never ask for extras...

In another life
we must have been apple thieves,
or a pack of liars and pickpockets
stealing bread from beggars, pies
from windowsills. Plague rats. Why
else are we paying off debt? Karmic
accountants, never wrong, take
twenty percent on parties over eight.

Parents

Old people are fools—
build houses from stale bread,
wander into underwater forests
on their wallowing, rusting horses.
They eat fish fat and rose hips and forget
to take their glasses off of the stove.

They turn children into geese
and beggars—
welcome them home with tar,
coal, gold. Their coffee tastes terrible
like tears and socks. Old people wash their hair
with yellow soap bought in the Fifties, their knees
with baby's blood.

Your parents are always gray in the morning.
They hide the silver knives, the trashcan. They play
with lettered tiles, and burn peppermints—
stave off the dark winter stories
their children tell.

Ghost in the Machine

January is the month
when we disappear
the sun doesn't pay the bills
ghosts from California call,
talk to our machine

Not like March, when god remembers
and throws dead squirrels at you

Not like May when
the baby sister calls about a boy
when the light changes and you find
your yellow sweater.

January forgot to write
has us on the tip of its tongue.

Dog at the End

My dog is fifteen and she dreams
about the end time.

She is going blind:

her eyes are like soap,
like her breath at six weeks, when I held her
in one palm.

She has outgrown me. Now she is my grandmother.

I put her in the bath, facing east
then west for the rinse. It is the end of the world.

The New World

So far, a bear and a wild cat.

I've married the bear, named the cat

and in spring, perhaps

the cat will die. Will return. My daughter,

my children

they all come: the cats,

the bears,

by summer.

In dreams, the cat is back

and children are grown

and I am hunting.

The Only People Left

This is one place where the Trail of Tears began.

Sunburn man,

my dad, works a circular saw on a beached houseboat

above a quarry

grown green with soft river grass.

It's June and I don't know why I'm here.

Dad works alone. I sit on a porchrail,

sweating, swinging my feet,

legs hooked at the ankles.

Maybe Mom will bring us lunch.

He looks itchy. It's hot and a thunderstorm

is rolling in from the west, making the light bend

like green and amethyst glass.

Dad's painting Major Ridge's house

and restoring the ancient boat

down by the elbow of the river

where the ferry used to run.

He works alone. Nobody visits Chieftain's Museum;
nobody thinks about where people go. I
don't know why we're here.

Tiny Fears

Bees don't scare me. They hurt,
and I've stepped on a few. I have a hole
on my nose from the porch bee, too.
But bees don't chase, don't tease—they mind
their wax. They just happen.

Mudmen

Kate and I made mudmen out of clay
and covered them with Elmer's glue.

At night we drew pictures under her back porch,
on the rock base of the house—
red mud handprints
are still there.

Cruelty

I always gave Caroline the ugly Barbie—
Brownie Butt. We laughed at her
when she made the doll fly.

I told my friend Alexis that the Jackalope
was a hoax. She cried, hit me,
hoped my face would fall apart.

I never let Tyslon and Daniel cheat, so
they never beat me. They stole my cards,
hid my pieces. I taught my baby sister
how to play Monopoly, so they still couldn't win.

I made them all laugh in the car
when they had to pee.

Daniel and the Awful Dog

One day he traded his allowance
on the worst dog I'd ever seen. A
mean little bullet; she hated water,
thunder, and people.

He named her Sally, begged our
parents to let him love her. She stayed,
ate the lattice, bit my visitors.

Eight years later, she died of a heart
the size of a football. Daniel threw everything
he owned into the pool. He screamed at us,
shoved Dad, cursed Mom. He never talked
to God again.

The Case for Shoes

The world is lovely.

The world is hard.

My grandfather's yard is full of gravel
and septic seepage;

my parents shipped me here again.

I can never take off my shoes.

Strange thistles and spiked weeds sit
half-hidden in the dust across the street;

I smell bleeding, sourgreen walnuts.

I am stuck here for a week, so I'm pretending
to pick buttercups.

Here's where the dead dog is buried; I liked him.

I think about slimy clay underfoot, microscopic worms
slipping into my cuts.

I don't want to go inside; I don't want anyone
to see my feet, so I stay out in the wavy heat,
throwing sticks from the tar-weeping train trestle
into the creek
full of arrowheads and hot mud.

Miracle

Before, when the sun had no edge,
nothing was cut from the rest of the world
by sharp, invisible lines. Everything was a starburst
a nimbus, a halo.

One day they gave me glasses
and the trees had leaves
and I never took the glasses off again.

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