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Consider This



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Consider This



## Broadcasts an April Day

A chartreuse scarf blows loose upon her shoulders,  
like a blur of spring grass in the wind.

At times she herself is green,  
a fiddlehead fern,  
unfolding  
in its own time,  
in its own season.

A chartreuse sweater warms her,  
as an alder fire warms, or a May sun  
unlocks pockets of ice.

When clouds freeze like pebbles in a nickel sky  
and the hummingbird with its yellow-green throat  
roosts somewhere in a dense, white thicket,  
wing flurry still,

she wears a chartreuse jacket, carries spring on her back,  
broadcasts an April day.

## Three-Legged Coyote

What terrible trap found her  
that day her leg dropped  
and left her hobbled?

I know the will to be free  
is absolute, greater  
than the pain

of a severed bone,  
and how energy heals  
in a heartless wilderness.

Trotting without fear  
she disappears into brush  
invisible as a star  
lost in the morning light.

I murmur, *Sister*.

## In Praise Of

Two spring ravens  
side by side soaring and diving  
    in a cloudless sky  
above fields of blue lupines  
and candles of slumbering poppies—

A young hound poised  
at the edge of the lawn  
    gleaming red in the summer sun,  
soft ears flapping  
when she answers my call  
*come girl, come!*—

The mountain  
of yellow and coral aspens  
    below a cobalt sky  
and a rabbit out of nowhere  
all ears and eyes—

The rooster's song  
on a cold winter day  
    when everything else  
is asleep or unaware  
it is morning—

## Complaint of an Insomniac

When sky fills with stars,  
the frogs begin, their songs bubbling up  
in a lusty chorus.

By the time Scorpius arches high above  
the great Aleppo Pine, I am fully awake  
unable to sleep again tonight.

No arrow of despair will ever trouble  
these amphibians, content to live  
without love and procreate

night after night with endless vigor  
beneath the pink and yellow vine  
outside my bedroom window.

## Teacher

First day of the year  
and I have resolved to stop  
worrying, always worrying  
even in my dreams.

Worrying about what?

Germs and wars,  
global warming, earthquakes,  
floods, and forests burning.

My hound sprawls  
in the winter sun snoozing  
on blades of dry grass,  
indifferent  
to a nearby rabbit that keeps  
one worried eye on her;

without intention she is my teacher.

## Where It All Began

Methuselah Monarchs

whose hunger for the beautiful  
never ceases

until they themselves are beautiful  
with their stained-glass wings  
lifting skyward.

*En masse* they begin  
their long journey back  
through uncharted sky

above earth and sea  
to return to the place  
where it all began.

## The Other Side of Day

Owls waken, the twin pans of their eyes  
absorbing changes  
in temperature and light

Bats stir . . .  
    Crickets on cue  
resume the score begun last night

Snakes,  
heeding an ancient guide,  
    glide onto the sand  
    tongues flicking

Before the attack the yips and howls  
of a band of coyotes

Rising beyond the butte  
the full orange moon  
will make a night of it

## Cottonwood

Scarred by lightning and drought  
the cottonwood in our yard  
doesn't belong here.

It thrives near springs and rivers,

not a mountain terrain among piñons,  
Big Sage and Apache Plume.  
Yet it has survived thirty years  
against all odds

in this alien place  
of little rain and dry clay soil.  
Wind-bullied today,  
its limbs

swing like a blind gladiator,  
a tribute to a spirit  
of green energy  
and a determination to live.

## Day's Eye

Out of darkness  
the raven flies east

into the bright eye  
of dawn, opening

coral in the desert sky.  
Dark bird, awake

and traveling light  
as the westward moon

this morning,  
my spirit flies too.

## To Wake Up

To rise in the cricket dawn  
as the Mojave Green withdraws  
to a daylight hideaway  
and the Tiger Owl roosts  
satisfied on a Stone Pine branch,

To feel the morning tug  
*come outside and see*  
the raven in the Joshua tree,  
like a candle silhouette against  
the luminous sky,  
a splendid bird Audubon would have  
sailed the world to sketch,

To be amidst custard clouds,  
ground squirrels, cottontails  
and spotted quail  
in their high desert home

where winter fat lives near cholla,

To wake up and know  
the fragile thread of life connecting  
spirit to matter  
depends on us all to survive.

## The Wind Around Here

Wind startles the trees  
heaving all branches  
then drops to its knees.

I've seen it whirl  
a fog of debris,  
like a dervish in ecstasy,

billowing skirt whipping up dirt  
to block out the sun,  
and sometimes so sweet

it seems to pirouette  
through the bedroom screen  
teasing the sleeper who dreams.

Today in the snow-glitter dawn  
it shocked me awake  
like a rowdy bird's song.

The wind around here  
you never get used to it.

## Morning Call

Ravens pass overhead,  
    black wings glistening  
        like violet flares of light  
flapping toward the rising sun.

Morning after morning  
    the sound of their wings  
        like a hundred silk whips

whoosh whoosh whoosh

## A New Day

Last night's storm pounded  
the compound, bending branches  
and scratching at windows  
before leaving a veil of snow  
over everything.

A house finch lands on a bare branch  
and sings a new day.

With the bright-voiced bird  
I, too, welcome the sun  
and want to sing, shedding  
the familiar armor of who I am  
and what I believe.

## After the Death of Raven

I have witnessed raven, full bodied and black  
with glistening broad wings flapping and banking,  
drifting in and out of sight.

I have seen him dive into danger to ward off mischief  
and stride with authority through tall yellow weeds.

I have felt his jet eyes bore and watched him  
tumble into blind nothingness beneath a great Stone Pine,  
his home for twenty years.

I have seen his widowed mate return and call  
then fly away—alone; and felt the loneliness of space  
without his sky play, calls, and noises:

an emptiness that opens like a grave  
without raven, without raven.

## Shadows in the Night

Night comes down, it comes down  
and stars tilt like silver shells

through universal darkness.

Wind sculpts into shape  
a new landscape as sands tumble over dunes  
singing

while we sleep.

And now, the hungers of night  
awaken with their yellow eyes to forage  
like shadows in our dreams.

Our legs grow heavy and we try to run  
but we can't run.

## Just Before Dawn

Just before dawn dreams open  
like a root cellar door  
beneath the lighted kitchen.

In this subterranean space  
thoughts become things  
that grow luxuriant roots,

and ears hear sounds  
unheard in waking hours:  
all the people I have loved and lost  
with so much to share.

## Melting Snow

Mud would clutch every foot if it could  
while raven glides to a high naked limb  
and observes our struggle

*poor things with no wings*  
*poor things who don't sing*  
*poor things who have forgotten how*

## The Promise

Pain issues from a fractured soul,  
the broken root of the tree.

Tomorrow buds will bubble  
out of the appearance of dead branches  
and new leaves will shine,

not because we stop grieving,  
not because we know how,  
not because we deserve new life,

but because that is the way,  
the invisible grace of life  
for every living thing.

In the rich and moist soil of forgiveness  
and surrender  
to that which is greater than us all,  
the crippled fig will flower  
like the laughter of healthy children.

That is the promise.

## Consider This

*I laugh when I hear the fish  
in the water is thirsty  
—Kabir*

Do you believe  
the bird on the wind  
cries to be free?

Or the tree on the windy hill grieves  
for lost leaves?

Or weeds lining  
the wind-ruffled pond  
long to be something else?

Or the earthworm working  
its tunnel of dirt  
considers itself unworthy?

## From a Morning Meditation

What the moon says: Change

What the sun says: Burn

What the cloud says: Transform

What the tree says: Surrender

What the river says: Listen

What the flower says: Praise

What the rooster says: Wake up

What the wind says: Bend

What God says: Be



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