

### **Leave The Pearls**

Discard that dress, I want to say  
to her, let me peel away the husk  
of the day as I peel away your slip,  
sliding it past hips in a sudden  
rotation, clockwise and spinning  
me like a planet off its axis,  
free of gravity's tyrannical  
pull.

No, I want to mummer into  
her neck, leave the pearls and rings  
but lose the rest, lose sight of  
time and space and the error of  
our ways, let the doorbell chime,  
let the phone ring, let dinner  
sizzle and burn, let the world  
fend for its own inhospitable  
self.

Remove, my look suggests,  
every last barrier that keeps me  
from your magnificence but the  
impulse falls short as there are  
eyes at the window, a nudge at  
the door, a buzz in the air and the  
steady howl of hungry mouths yet  
to be fed.

### **Juggling Fire, Blindfolded**

As the government of her nerves  
falls into open revolt, I have nothing  
I'm told, but patience and humor  
to combat the mutiny at hand, the  
coup of chaos over desire, her  
womb palace stormed by the armies  
of imbalance with troops along  
the border securing the perimeter,  
guarding the interior, aware of  
the slightest breach, the smallest  
advance, each shot across the bow  
batted down with haste and force.

As the government of her nerves  
sputters and starts and sputters  
again with a logic of its own design,  
I will dance and sing and juggle  
fire, blindfolded, if only for a  
momentary pause in the freefall  
of her scrambled thoughts, plucking  
them with delicacy and care like  
negotiations in a minefield, giving  
voice to the constituency of each  
extremity and limb, searching for  
the wiser counsel of her body  
politic, grateful for any sense  
with the will to present itself.

### **What Once Is Is Now Was**

What once is is now was  
what once did is now does  
what once wished is now fact  
what once whole is now cracked

what once cracked now to mend  
what once taken now to tend  
what once known now a guess  
what once East is now West

what once West now turns North  
what once first now comes fourth  
what once urgent now on pause  
what once simple yields to awe

what once awed now commonplace  
what once hidden leaves its trace  
what once sour finds its sweet  
and what once strange extends to greet

### **The MacPherson Thing**

The MacPherson thing is alive,  
an organism to reckon with,  
genetic and hard-wired, fused to  
her DNA like eye color and blood  
type, an heirloom of certainty,  
rightness assumed.

The MacPherson thing calls its  
own shots, ninety-seven percent  
sure of itself and not so concerned  
with the other three, of little  
consequence with those kinds  
of odds to play.

The MacPherson thing doesn't need  
popular support, doesn't need  
to campaign for your vote, doesn't  
need to shake your hand or kiss  
your babies although it will  
when the spirit moves - and  
it often does.

The MacPherson thing is comrade  
and enemy, friend and foe, enviable  
in surplus yet indifferent to your  
envy, goodness and betterment  
its frequent cause but exhausting  
when you choose to sidestep the  
intent of its benevolent aim.

## **The Good Press**

Look, we'll all cause some wreckage  
over time, break a tooth or an arm  
or a heart, all succumb to our  
certain blindness, fall victim  
to the good press, believe in our  
fractured fairytales.

                    The least we  
can do is survey the damage and  
claim it as our own, set the chairs  
back upright and settle up the  
bill, and maybe with time and luck  
and grace we can sit in those chairs,  
one day,

                    at a table heavy with food  
and drink and remark on the health  
of the fixed tooth or the casted  
arm, admire the stitched and faded  
scar of the mended heart, the muscle  
made all the stronger for the  
regrettable abuse.

### **Your George Bailey Moment**

At twenty-three, you'll have your George Bailey moment and earnestly promise Mary a lassoed moon, never once considering the impossibility of delivery, never once appreciating what you've just done.

At thirty-three, you'll have that quiet, unsettled moment of inventory, the long-coming realization that there will never be enough rope to pull the damn thing from the sky, that the moon will keep its stubborn distance from your youthful vow,

And at forty-three, you'll finally get the obvious point, that it was never the moon that she wanted but just the moment instead, the closed eyes and interlocked hands as you stood beneath and enjoyed its light all the same.