Marine

A picnic boat glides across the waterway
and when the light hits it turns
into Egyptian gold.
There’s beauty everywhere.
I follow it around like a man
chasing pike in a kayak.
August triggers alarums,
paint won’t dry electricity shuts down
the sun doesn’t move.
Get a jump on the hump of it,
guilt carried off by bicycle to the dump.
Look at the beach
and then look at the beach.

Teetering between the personal and the universe
or simply unnerved by the crazy beauty
of this green world and by what
miracle I remain under it
enveloped in these garlands
of shivery light.
The clouds were pink as Korean nails tonight
the sun went down a fraction sooner
ocean shining like an insect’s back
or the black diamond light
of limos waiting for criminal bankers.
This is how the dark gets in the door
New moon slim as a butcher’s blade
the Chinese stove housed
the flames of a wood fire,
apple and maple burning upward,
“go up, little smoke”
make me a place in the pagoda Gautama,
I'll wear my kimona and behave with grace.
August’s equatorial heat makes the yeast rise
before the bread, like art before technique
age before beauty sense before rhyme
the branch knocking at the window
in the night a Morse code message
from under the world.

The garden in darkness, no moon,
fireflies signalling from the four quarters
hovering over the damp grass
and my glasses catching a flash
of light sent from the deep blue yonder.
Who calls out my name?
What creatures out there
see me in their dreams?
The silence between tracks
knocks against my ears
grass pressing my face
cool as the cat’s fur
coming in from the night
the great joy inside everything
waiting to be tapped out
like sugar from a spoon.
Morning light coming toward me through
‘fields of corn where Troy once stood.’
The first cup of coffee opens the inner eye
but the second one floods the mechanism.
blueberry, violet, aqua marine
tourmaline smooth as
a stone beneath the tongue.
The nerves remain on the inside now,
light pours in from far out in the Atlantic
a righteous light shimmering like the pearls
looped round your swansong neck.
Some garden variety god embedded in it,
or god of the floating world
shares this sunflower splendor
leaves already spinning from the walnut tree,
a hawk drifting at high altitude
as I stand among flowers, eating figs,
black cat nuzzling bare leg.
Life is good, even with your tongue cut out.
Later, under cover of the night
the sky slides down into the sea.
Sappho says, “Do not move stones.”
hard words soften at the edges
to form a curve that moves
to the next line and binds it into the last.
Lingo bangs around the page
like rain clunking on a roof, or bats
colliding with a wall in a storm,
their echolocation washed out by weather.
Children in cornfields unafraid
of what came out of the dark waved
long sticks tied with rags and
the bats arrived like Messerschmitts
examining the shaken air
everything benevolent even
when the dog disappeared
or a neighbor died on his first
motorcycle and the wreck
stood in his parents’ yard for months,
bent chrome gleaming in winter sunlight.

* A Face in the Crowd *

Somewhere a man is standing in line for the movies
while designing a landmine that looks like a child's toy.
Why should he be allowed to live on this planet?
That scientist who said her brain was as big as a planet,
her presumption made me laugh,
a grain of truth embedded in it like a hurricane
will embed a sliver of straw in a fencepost.
Truth, beauty, and coffee in the morning
as the sun rises miraculous, what else is there?