Beached Seal, Dying

It could be
I shouldn't wait with you.
When I'm dying
I might want to be alone, without
distraction, work to do
unhooking and unbraiding,
loosening the seams. I'd be glad

if it were like this, though,
under open sky, near dusk,
the bow wave of the distant ferry
motionless, a gull
tipped sideways for a second
in the wind.

February

The sharp shadow of the eave on the porch,
fir needles dry the far side of it,
frozen in a skim of ice here at my feet.

Moss steaming greenly in the sun.

Hello, spider. Hello, old broom.
Hello, world, you who also know
nothing you can say.

Lupercal

At last, faint light into the evening,
buds like felted seed pearls
on the cherry tree.
More jars empty in the pantry
than are full, and one last squash
poised, dusky, on the cutting board.
The bleak magnificence of spring just out of sight,
flame rushing through life's vacant core.

May

The first clear day after weeks of cloud:
like smoke, the pollen drifting from the firs.

Moon

Moon, there you are again,
solo in the pale blue sky.
I agree it's strange,
the way I stare.
The snow on the mountains
is as white, their dark rock
as remote. I, too,
said goodbye to the earth
long ago.
But, you see,
I touch it still.
With my hands, my feet. My eyes.

Now

You are not your own.
In you, through you,
what lives itself.
No stopping it,
no making it

go away. Everybody
feels it: the old pine
and the new pine beetle.
Nothing to fix,
nothing to do.

Just say yes.

October

A ragged strawberry in bloom,
geese overhead.
Trying again: the long work of gratitude.

Rocky Shore

Sharp sun and a big northwest wind,
the world a breathless rumpus
underneath. Gulls up,
wheeling high against the light, tide
running fast out in the strait.
Earth with its arms wide open:
uncountable its loves.
Even you. Even me.

Sunshine

The weight of it, the way it gives way
as you walk into the field.
The stillness that it loves: the slough sedge,
black heads hung like jewels,
the sleeping newt, the voiceless stone. As though
the weight that glows inside each thing
were happiness. All of us,
heaped, gold, sunken
at the bottom of the sky.

Untitled

I understand despair. History,
after all. But my griefs are simple.
No great dream or longing that I've learned
won't be fulfilled.

A thought arises from the dark earth
of the body — we don't know how.
Uncountable the days the shining seed
drifts in the wind and disappears.

View from the Ferry

Last car on the upper deck
so as we pull into dock I'm standing
aft in the open air.
The ferry stalls, slow as the sun
this time of year. 3:00 p.m.,
already dusk gnaws at the edges
of the shadows. We drift
towards rush hour, eyes front.

And there — behind a tangle
of guy ropes, pilings, warning signs —
a mixed flock of fifty, maybe more,
buffleheads, scoters, merganzers,
dipping, swivelling. It rides
the swell as one mind,
weightless
in the gusting light.

Winter

Feet bare on the bare boards
of the porch. No moon.
What was it you once asked me?
The dead fruit, sweet, in its glass jars.