

Immigrant Sea

Aroused by her inaccessibility, he aches for more
of her life to live inside him. Watching

the breakers, standing so close he can feel
heat coming off her wet scalp. What is

his relation to this person
before him, so familiar and foreign? The way

he searches out her face, he searches out himself. Gusts
thrash crests of swell, spring grasses twirl

circles in the sand where they stand without speaking. She
wants him to know it's all charged, even grass

positive, pollen negative, so when grass waves,
it sweeps the air for pollen. He feels electricity all around

as though the wild drama of the coming storm were already
aware of them, foreigners on this shore. Little

sapphire-blue flowers speckle the dunes.
He wonders if he has let himself flatten out

into a depthless sheet, like escalator stairs, whether in the end
he'll disappear underground without the smallest lurch

of resistance. But when her lavish face turns toward him
beaming, the corners of her eyes wind-wet,

he yields to that excess, he reappears to himself.

Forest

Erogenous zones in oaks
 slung with
 stoles of lace-lichen the

sun's rays spilling
 through leaves in
 broken packets a force

call it nighttime
 thrusts mushrooms up
 from their lair

of spawn mycelial
 loam the whiff of port
 they pop into un-

trammeled air with the sort of
 gasp that follows
 a fine chess move

like memories are they? or punctuation? was it
 something the earth said
 to provoke our response

tasking us to recall

an evolutionary
course our long ago

initiation into
the one-
among-others

and within
my newborn noticing have you
popped up beside me love

or were you here from the start
a swarm of meaning and decay
still gripping the underworld

both of us half-buried holding fast
if briefly to a swelling
vastness while our coupling begins

to register in the already
awake compendium that offers
to take us in you take me in

and abundance floods us floats
us out we fill each
with the other all morning

breaks as birdsong over us
who rise to the surface
that our faces might be sprung

Post-fire Forest

Shadows of shadows without canopy,
phalanxes of carbonized trunks and
snags, their inner momentum shorted-out.
They surround us in early morning
like plutonic pillars, like mute clairvoyants
leading a Sursum Corda, like the excrescence
of some long slaughter. All that moves
is mist lifting, too indistinct to be called
ghostly, from scorched mycelial
layers of rain-moistened earth. What
remains of the forest takes place
in the exclamatory mode. Cindered
utterances in a tongue from which
everything trivial has been volatilized,
everything trivial to fire. In a notch,
between near hills stubbled
with black paroxysm, we spot
a familiar sun— liquid glass globed
at the blowpipe's tip. If the landscape
is dreaming, it must dream itself awake.

You have, everyone notes, a rare talent

for happiness. I wonder how
to value that, walking through wreckage.
On the second day, a black-backed
woodpecker answers your call, but we
search until twilight without finding it.