

I wouldn't pretend I couldn't see
my nakedness in Eden. I wouldn't lie
placid as a hooked and fatty fish
under Adam. That was my first
argument with God. The second,
that he turned my sister into bone
for his own and Adam's sake
honed away everything she'd been
when we lay together among stars.

Some nights I wait at the edge of the garden--
how lush it is, how full of anguish.
I can hear the blossoms breaking,
roots of rushes wringing out the earth.
Light and docile, she walks
to the hawthorn hedge, always
a trail of creatures at her side,
lynx, coyote, prong-horned antelope.
Does she know I'm here?

If she looked in the eyes of the cat
she would see me. My footsteps
barely traceable, my voice thin
whisp across her cheek. She's forgotten
my name, forgotten our one smell
as we wound around each other,
her fingers in my mouth, my hand holding
her heartbeat, little wounded wren
I could not save from grief.

The Fall of Eve

When the animals used to talk to me--
lisp of snail, click of grasshopper's
exact consonants, dolphin's diphthong
slipping through the waves--there were rumours
a woman, perhaps with wings, roamed
the wasteland. They said she was furred,
sleek and shimmering as weasel,
eyes wells of deepest water
where you'd surely drown.

Something stirred in me, a ripple

when a stone is dropped. Not knowing
what she feared, I washed
the smell of man from my skin,
walked to where the garden stopped
and everything Adam couldn't name
fell into poetry and silence.

It was a place you sensed
you were watched, caught in a gaze
that made you strange.

The serpent was the last I understood,
his voice stayed after otter's,
after hawk's, wolf's and rat's.
I could feel his belly's rasp
across my own, my thighs prickling.
When he offered me the apple
I bit because I wanted
what he'd polished with his tongue.

At the hawthorn hedge, good and evil
sweet in my mouth, I said *Lilith*
though I didn't remember
what it meant, then I said *beloved*
and something like a breath lifted
the hair on the back of my neck.

Though I couldn't see
through shadows I grasped
she is what I've lost. God's voice
roared through the leaves
and I glimpsed wings unfolding,
blue feathers bewildering
the other blue of the sky.

My own arms rose and I know
the way you know your own sorrow
on this earth, once I was that dear,
that close to her,
once I too could fly.
