

Gardenia (2014)

~for Jess~

After rain. Moonbeams pitched through jade and geranium
influence the floor as lace. It is midnight's room, alive again,

where the dead bump into your kitchen table and chairs, knock over bowls
and wrap their interludes in the light, a silver purer than ectoplasm. They recall, through the
mists

of their indifferenes, the aromas of sage, of lemon, the act of rubbing basil between
their palms, their teeth; they open their mouths toward the honeys, tomatoes, moon

loaves, various glistenings that make a heaven
of our plot of ground. Among summer's steams they blend into almost-

element, they waiver between prisms; in the radiance of their crowdings they loom over the
gardenia
in the hipped glass jar, tremble teetering on flesh, perfume of a smolder

they can no longer comprehend. Your joy
over this grocery-store find, this slight, white breathing, these soft cloths of veins

even further from their understanding, but how they linger,
filling your kitchen like ghostly balloons, fumbling through their effervescences

for words they cannot form, their fists consistently open, letting
go. You will soon come down the stairs to your altar

of coffeepot and berries as dawn pulls its gilding bones over your house, your world
and caress the petals with your fingers, saying little, or nothing, while the dead hustle departures

before the sun discovers them smoke, dust motes, unachieved rainbows, leaves
slimmer than green. But they could find on your lips, illuminated by sigh

and morning, the light-kissed curve of delight, a treasure lost
among the silk of their vanishings.

The Sensual World (2011)

You have forgotten the ocean.
Not uncommon. After all,
summer leaves it to strangers
to look after you.
You remember
the brilliant white light of scales and how
it made your teeth ache.
You pause,
wince at the retreating wave
as it drags its net of sparkles
across the sand,
and splash a few steps.
Your feet cool.
The red dye of the shore
washes away.
Water chains your ankle.
You're in.

The earth frightened me. I wanted it
to rest as more than simply a heavy
and irrelevant
wedding ring of cycles.
So, last spring,
desperate,
not knowing what else to do,
I took on the duty of watering
a basket of snapdragons.
The petals trembled with flashbacks
of their births
in a hive of muddy boots, wet light
and fetid creepings of wild season.
Someone planted the flowers,
someone else had to water them.
Their helmet of tongues wagged with thirst.

That night
I dreamed that a boy who had been dead for a while
was the fourth letter of God.
Surprised by the boy's face,
the flowers jumped up and bloomed.
He remembered
that the earth's discomfort is catalogued
in its handiwork
and in remembering

The Sensual World (2) (2011)

called the blossoms to life.
I didn't pretend to understand
when the dream cocoon unraveled, dwindled
and then dissolved
in the watering can.
That afternoon,
I dug my fingers deep
into the drenched soil
which was alive
with the smell of attempt.

Memory. The anti-
matter of dreams.
Golden petals of revelation.
The sun's kissing
(or scratching?)
your back as you leave
its arms for the sea's...
You'd think there'd be
an easier way into it,
but there isn't.

You have to use both your hands.