

BLAZEVOX 2KX

Spring 2010

Elizabeth Kerlikowske

These hours beyond danger

One more cigarette behind the barn.

One last stretch in the sun.

Bottle of beer at the fire pit.

Stroll through the garden at harvest.

Dodge the giant bumblebee.

Chase it. Repel it with smoke rings.

Wear loose skin.

Hawk overhead with a rusty key.

Only a few minutes til dinner:

stay.

Directions for spice cake

Stand up straight like celery.

Check linoleum for gravel.

The sister provided with the recipe
is unnecessary.

The mittens needn't be a pair.

Blink goes the light bulb.
Bang the expansion of metal.

Unfold wax paper.
Reflect on the somber ecstasy of Xmas.

Tin hat from World War I.

Double check the calendar.
Tear off pages until it's October.

Add downspout water.

Dust legs and wings with
the perfume of Columbus's desire.

Who wouldn't risk everything?

350 degrees tucked into 26 degrees.
Another handknit sweater.

Are you kneeling yet?

Squint.

Rising through the door's pane
she's there,

familiar stranger from a past life
under a faint spattered star.

Middle age in September

Wind chimes shiver, no contact.

Mulberry leaves alter light fall.

Mosquito season. Bee time of day.

Shadows look for warmth in the worst places.

Three yellowed maple leaves fall together.

Cat's eyes never leave the birdbath.

A truck's reflection moves backwards

against its forward sound.

This way to the egress

My throat is lined
with an uncomfortable prophylactic sheet
of gold leaf
the kind we used to ornament our drawings
thinking that elevated crap to art.

I cough up golden nuggets
excavating raw canyons
into which my voice has disappeared
with no echo.

My cunt is hammered pewter
the way we made ashtrays at camp

flat sheet of metal laid across a bowl of wood
followed by hours of pounding,
years of men pumping their impressions
into the soft alloy.

I could carry on this way
the iron lungs, the tin ears
silver tongue, but why?

The two important avenues are worn out.

Nocturno

Sleepwalking through calendars
is not the same as sleep
Look at the cat. Look at the man.

Marshmallows lodge in the marsh oddly
like the sleep in sleeplessness.

I am alert for what might happen
to sheep. Slumber is another word
for predator.

The work of sleep is tedious,
the opposite of gardening.

Sleep fucks me with no pleasure.

My face hurts
from making faces at sleep
while I try to sleep.

In return, sleep puckers my face with wrinkles.

Voices murmur in the fan.
A radio is buried, on, in the cement walls.

Even if just my leg falls sleep,
I feel real joy.

Sleep tells me to let go
but I have to keep counting.

An archer shoots the apples of my days
right behind my eyes

sleep sleep sleep sleep