

Melissa Chappell

Aperture

I see your face now in a million pixels of light.  
A still frame on my desk, time an encrusted fossil in the sea.  
Yet, now and again, in dreams, you come flashing before my sight.  
You are near, near as my glove is to me.

You in your poor houndstooth coat at Eastertide.  
The dogwood blooms easy on the bough.  
We spoke of One who keeps our hungering faith alive,  
when gnarled winter bleakly howled.  
Faith's aperture was ever wide:  
no lesser light would God allow.

Now silvering blue stretches between the "us" once dreamed.  
I think on you even when slumbering night folds 'round.  
We are sewn close as a woolen jacket's seam.  
Then let us lie beneath the dogwoods, as we are far from unpeaceable crowds.  
Let us rest upon the tender blossoms, fallen bruised from their boughs.

## Waking

Light beckons—new eyes open—unhardened,  
motes of light float in tremulous air.  
It is my waking, and I am cresting with thanksgiving,  
as the Enoree crests her banks  
when she is too full, too full, as joy is cresting  
throughout these vining-most words, because  
I—I am alive, if only a mote in the sea of  
God's eye, even in these days of fermenting fear,  
I am full of gladness, which, though  
beleaguered by shadows and the coyote's  
howls of death,  
never loses hope,  
for in the morning, in the fire-green swaying  
of trees, in the umbrous empty sparrow's nest,  
--a jealous tomb--  
Light beckons...

## As Before

Winter is the right time  
for a virus,  
I suppose,  
for in its hollow,  
soundless days,  
we are twining  
helices, warm in  
hope's deep hold,  
where mammal dreams  
stir and waken,  
to a country of  
earth-breaking marigolds,  
forsaking the days  
that take away our breath,  
the masks of pretense  
and vagaries that ride  
snowy plumed breezes.  
On the hearthstone  
let despair burn brittle as  
tinder in the ash.

Therefore with  
perseverance and  
a will to fight  
until the jessamine  
overtakes our graves,  
and the Monarch leaves its  
branch no more,  
a new fire shall burn in winter,  
and in its rising light we  
shall see one another,  
face to face,  
as before