

e. a. toles

There are Days pt. 2

to recognize
anything but others,

I watch the sliver
sun wiggle
worming

for moist earth.
how I long to be fertile,

to be fresh and deserving
of seeds.

I am the plot
which refuses
ovule. I have grown

envious of my friends

with courage,
who boast cultivated thorns.

sunlight hangs from
their tendrils and branches,

dripping like the hangover
from a dream.

when do they rise?
what have they found
in the sacred

earliness of a day,
waiting to pass into

the next?
one day,
there will be too many

seeds.
one day it will be warm
enough that I will
need no sheets.

Owl

an owl watches me.

these rooms did not birth
me. yet I was found

and nearly without teeth
at that.

my mother fed me on pellets,

on regurgitated death,
on loved bones ground
useful and nurturing.

she had grand wings, they
smelled of iron, her
breath of vermin.

she told me I would have
a beak one day. my talons

would come in. kind mother
owl, how were you to know

my molars were beneath
my skin? could you not hear

my labored tears?

an owl is watching me.
each story is only a lost
feather, the man standing

grey and cool on the corner
was always silent

yet his eyes are wide
as if he were seeing
a dream walking

before him.
if I could believe,

I swear to you, I would.
how can death still

be so silent and concerned
all these years?

there is an owl,
it watches me out of the corner
of its right eye,

watches as the light glints
through the steel night,

watches as i learn to be still
and listen to the silence
resting on a breeze.

Speaking

I am trying to learn
to speak to myself; it has
been some time since I have
had to listen closely.

all around me, the world closed
up like a loved book ready
to slip behind my bed.

there are different measures
of listening. each

has its own cadence. my mother
listens with her words, I had
a teacher who listened with tea.

for a time, I thought I was deaf
to my own voice. that is not
true I do not think it is true.

sometimes there is a whining
in my bones and my gums

this is my voice.
it is a hard voice to hear,
it is small and wooden

like so much of my life
or memories. but I think

I am learning.
I close my eyes.

let the whine stretch into an ocean
of white noise grown disappointed.

it is the sound of discontent,
the sound of eventual decomposition.