

solemnity of fish  
there were no dancers  
understand this  
do not weep  
do not weep  
from the belly  
from the bowels  
what is anger?  
where does the deep end?  
there were once walls here  
housed like fruit in skin  
it ripped  
hum of traffic  
lull of strip tease  
what happened three decades ago?  
there is an end to this story?  
(wrap it up)  
say grace and everything  
padlock the door  
when leaves fall from trees  
when birds can be heard from a mile away  
here, like a dove in a hand  
(mystery obscured)  
so white  
so white with filth  
what I will say to you will not be heard  
it will be unnatural  
it will be like something opening up  
a row of corpses  
proportionless  
I want to tell you of my perennial  
gracelessness, of an epithet hunger,  
of joy that is neither sadness nor joy,  
a joy that is a rung of teeth  
say something

*from [A Gathering of Matter]*

Wide eyes all white and glistening. Gradual induction into a bare, still damp, secreting  
pact. The body, hammering. Hammered. Awoken to the second door, the closed one.

She focuses on the sofa's hem, unlatches the rung of locks, rejecting catapult.

It was a brown room,  
wood-paneled,  
an attic room,  
cut into by the glaring  
television, pared like sleeves,  
stank as funk stinks,  
as the nearly dead,  
as the red red red,  
as dripping old eyes,  
it was a late December sky,  
the hallway led to the  
bathroom,  
the waiting,  
a tall glass,  
my departing.

Blood that has been shed and wasted. Blood resonating, a sting. Found them in a puddle of it. Positioned as if they had been placed – had placed themselves – so that the puddle made a pond for them to lie in. So that brown bodies rest preternaturally still in a red pond in a house on a floor. Someone – a great distance away – rang and rang and rang, and then walked away. Someone else – later – thought and then said, *wasteful* and *shame*.