

## Bedside Pastoral

First: fervor for swampland / then hospital socks / Gessoed floors /  
like planets of milk— / he is dreaming of swimming / and running /  
at once / He is endlessly / *about to* / Sometimes predreams / are the  
wildfires in Georgia that year / the pond cypress / & bladderwort /  
aspirin-white / in flame / then this / According to sound / silence  
is more capable / According to words / the words will water out /  
Trying anyway / Calling it the balder parts / of meadows / Saying  
solastalgia / when you really meant / solace / Saying sonar / when  
you really meant / so long / maybe . . . / The possibility is there  
for goodbye-ing / He is downright / chatty in sleep / He is oceans  
away in his boatlike / bed / He is muttering / *I didn't mean love*  
/ Sometimes fog / is really an ocean / sometimes hospital-room  
shadows spring / many-mouthed: / Radiolaria in green phases /  
This is hardly / the problem / This is hardly the ghost of / sundew  
and pitcher plants / ash-eaten / Calling it / synonym for / tough  
place to land / or wrong place to fall asleep dreaming / The room  
globed / and green at night / like the deepest parts / of a basin of  
water / There is more to the story / There is collarbone / shaped  
like a lightning-struck branch / There is / small shuffling drafts /  
over well-bitten skin / There is hardly a moment / when you don't  
remember him saying / Forgiveness is a small price to pay / Calling  
it memory / & calling his bluff / He was always a cautious child.

## Procedural

seekers after gold dig up much earth and find little

—Joan Retallack

- poem for                    the next ice age
- poem where                no one wears black to the funeral(s)
- poem for                    the fact that weather does not ask permission to  
touch you
- poem using                specific names for all the people we've known who  
have died before turning twenty-one
- poem watching            you clear the driveway of snow    It accumulates  
the more you clear and more and more and more
- poem to                    tease out the wrinkles
- poem enacting            the storm shutters' sound when you close them  
and no one else
- poem for                    the day Vi's mother came to visit us    Said *What*  
*weather we're having* and nothing more    How  
when she left, it rained for twelve days straight
- poem using                twelve hours spent without music
- poem in spite             of twelve hours spent without music
- poem for                    the condition of the hour that sheds minutes like  
untouched skin
- poem for                    Violet and Henry and Katherine and Will and—

poem for           not knowing how to winnow the wreckage for  
language

poem where        cat walks across the piano leaving half-visible paw  
prints: the most alive thing

poem for           your symmetrical chicken-pox scars

poem that         could do nothing

poem scraping     sheets of ice off the windshield

poem for           the taut calf muscles pulled under the body when  
you crouch to build a fire

poem about        sixth graders learning the meaning of *dormant*

poem like         the nightmare we share where Vi's body looks only  
sleepy—the snowfall veiling her

poem for           the stray animals you saved from the rain gutter

poem to            make voids iridescent

poem as            eight phone calls in six months    Accumulation  
More and more and more

poem in            want of mouths that taste more like a thunderstorm,  
less like rain shadow's low urging hum

poem of            cone seed    pencil scrape    moth wing—all our  
wind-worn memorials

poem of	portraits of odalisques at rest, shelling peanuts, in line at the DMV
poem coming	to me in dreams about hunger, dreams about wishing ghosts were more than a trick of the light
poem where	you say <i>This is the plan</i> and mean it
poem without	wanting a poem
poem by	silence
poem buying	deicer <i>Its blue looks like Gatorade</i> you said <i>Should we drink</i> you said
poem for	the day you killed a rabid opossum—its blood spilled like milk across sargassum-colored shale
poem of	you picking milkweed from the river
poem for	pome and pith and star-stemmed prints left when touched by unexpected cold fronts
poem inspecting	collarbone, calling it wing
poem discovering	your long-lost MetroCard
poem until	you need more
poem as	warning
poem as	water stains on the only photographs we have left

poem about	being the only ones left
poem toward	stockpiling    batteries    gallons of water freeze-dried soup packets
poem in	ode of the magazines in hospital waiting rooms. Would you like to take a quiz that will guess your horoscope? Would you like to find the perfect brand of toothpaste? Would you like to see him now?
poem saying	<i>At least</i> and <i>At least</i> again
poem like	the way you helped pack up the socks they'd never wear again
poem as	preparation    as closing the picnic-table umbrella    trimming the tree branches turning the thermostat down
poem says	The next ice age we will be sitting at the window with matches. We will not know we are still not ready.