

HOW LATE DESIRE LOOKS

To begin with something not already caught
In the current of another's life, an indifferent
Hand of transparent wind playing first
With the sleeve at your damp wrist, then
Pressing strands of hair sideways against my
Mouth, the beautiful coming, like a gift
Of the rare Indigo Bunting, body turquoise
At your feeder in the slanting light, soft
Particles of air, silting through high aspens
To settle around us like hope itself. I could

Watch you carry a clear glass jar of water
Walking nowhere in particular, at least
Forever—back and forth across your yard
Where five orange poppies, like saucers
Tilt together on slender necks, and scents
Of globe basil, nicotiana and lilies intermix
Because you've cultivated this rocky, sloping
Piece of wilderness into a place to live—
Just for the way what looks in your eyes
Like thirst, holds me contained one minute

Longer than intended, since I'm a neighbor
Merely returning a borrowed bicycle or book
And even now we hear your wife's car grind
Into the drive, arriving, and the startled
Bunting, which is actually black but for a
Complex pattern of diffraction through its
Structure of feathers, suddenly takes off
So that what remains are a few Chickadees,
The most common Yellowthroat, taunting:
Which-is-it, Which-is-it, Which-is-it
And the Grosbeak with its rose-breasted blush.

ALWAYS, the SPACE BETWEEN

*the scales of pale light and the thread of breath exhaled
perhaps the (coming unstitched) last wish from the
dying heart, the light dying, its subtle
ritual intinction—a slipping of mind into brightness
seeped upward, always the space (not) left
between the wisdom of something instinctual and solid
for example, the sudden looming of shoulders
and then, the darker shadow of (something!) just behind
the shoulders—makes a question out of the weight
of light just above them and everything else.
The gradation is only visible (and the long running-stitch
of light meaning Door and the Go on—touch it, sip
it, put your lips against this last (hands) glass—there
where the lips touch glass touch water touch air) there
along the seams, when a dazzling innocence streams
milky blue from the eye not extinguished and
the mind surmounting through space (what is the weight of the space, again?)
has not yet let go and still rushes its how many
hands in to ease the ideas (fish) darting (copper coins
for the eyes) streaming like fracturing
refracting light slicing the dying room in two pieces,
each flooded (flooding the ears eyes nose mouth please
stay please where are you now and) always, with sound.*

—KATRINA ROBERTS