

On Returning a Stolen Garment Bag

a series of clear, sharp, variant phrases
separated by morning pauses
on the fence outside the window
occupies your thoughts before you notice
its tinkling, shards and syrupy loops
reminding you to think things as houses
beyond the warmest April of the century
philosophical, resourceful, delicate
handing your friend his garment bag
full of unread poems in the dream
like a concert in miniature the robin
brings you into the day, singing tsit!
stop your dream and listen, I'm here
outside the house, watching, revising
my water music, tsit, get to work

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Passing Through the Shadow of the Earth

ebb tide dropping the river
frog leaps from the mud
greased stone I step on

kingfisher starlings red-winged blackbirds

heron beginning

of attention

paddle digs in along kayak
flanks sending upriver

low blinding light puts
you swiftly in shadows
cresting through the chop
wind against current

kingfisher clicks
ahead, on a branch, restless
darts around the bend
figure eights
wings fanned a moment
making a bow

wind in the trees
these still woods, growing moss
exhale at the tide going out

eyes green blue obsidian look out
up or down searching
for knowledge in our bodies
which know nothing

but what they know
they know well, are satisfied
with so much less

what the turtle knows
estivating in mud
the snake propelling its slight
snout along the surface
the butterfly tumbling in a gust
the hawk lofting and aiming
its deadly sternum

all things turn, flash, catch
in the mind a moment

we pass through shadows
we do not know lie on us
penumbral
degrees of influence

the earth and moist part
of plants blown over us
by the hot, drying wind

people say the planet is dying
it is we who are dying
hungry for life we put the earth
inside of us

we want it to pass through
the gateway of dispossession

this not owning what we are
being surprised the way
touch answers touch
on its own terms

a loose cloud expands
contracts, turns
synchronized blackbirds
opening their ranks to the wind

not fixated, meandering
always a movement away from
and a return

places, persons
we come to love with a particularity

that is not of the past
but ongoing a matter
of trust

lifted out of yet immersed in
a change that does not change

knowledge of what does not die
until we do

the heron steers slowly
out of long river grasses
legs trailing, squawks
disappears

doves cooing
under bridge rafters

as I pull myself out, remove
sandals step into the thick

clay of the bank
haul the kayak up
over mud and grass

where the road crosses
at a bend in the river