

Light on Wood

Daybreak, undeniably;
deflected light
filters through panes;
something smiling
gnaws at planes
of wood; table
and dresser shimmer,
flash rainbow
refractions,
like Venetian glass,
a sub-rosa
revelation
regarding mass
and substance;
no whirling particle
changing to wave
revealed – only
that sense of nothing
being solid,
as it seems.

Evidence Bag

I offer these
as proof:
noises white
as corpse-lips;
aspens' windless whisper;
rat-tail grass
hisses each step;

wherever I move
unspoken thunder
waits quiet within the bushes,
subsonic rumbles
heard by dogs.

Nothing harmless
waits here;
this place is cursed.
Only the question hangs.

Blackberry Jam

If just once again, I could gather blackberries
with you along Deheuwydd Lane
I'd study the image of you much more carefully.

I'd record that sound the fruit makes
as it plops into empty plastic right to
the hush when the bowl is filled, trace

the press the handle makes, my other hand
in yours. If I could simmer blackberries
into mush, hover over pans to skim

then pour the sugar, I'd bend my head down low
inhale pungency to dizziness,
to setting point. If liquid fruit then, jelled,

were poured, transparent into warm glass jars,
then cooled, I'd have to eat it all. With empty
jars what would be left except to try to keep

all senses sharp, the taste sealed forever on the tip
of my tongue, like a long lost tune.

Wolf Hunger

*She's starving, my mother said
so you've got to go
and you must wear your lovely new cloak.*
She tied the hood tight
bright red wool fell from
my shoulders in pleats this wind
and the grasping branches
are wrecking. I'm so hungry
I'd like to eat it.

Everyone's thin especially
my mother, her eyes
grown small and black like
a hunter's, lips drawn back
over her teeth. Daddy went looking
for something to shoot and didn't
come back. I don't think
there's much under this cloth,
the basket is light as a feather.
Whatever is in there won't keep
my grandma from starving.

The wind whistles and pines
make funny cracking noises
when they're tormented. If there's
a wolf about, he's hungry too.
He's not going to miss me is he?
I stand out like slap on the cheek
So why did she make me wear it,
this red cloak? There's a handful of
grain and an egg in the larder just
enough for one, though I thought
we could share it. I told her so.

The knife she was sharpening
slipped from her hand to the floor.
Wait till you're back, she said
Best stay as you are for now – without food,
you'll be too skinny for the wolf
I've kept from our door – so far.

She showed her long teeth in a smile, pushed
me out over the step; there was a click.
as she turned the key in the lock. I still hear
her shout: *Quick – run – go –*
believe me you're much safer
out there in the wild with the wolf.