

## Writing the Mornings

My belly, as I sit curled  
 into morning, rounds and softens  
 ready to spill a flood of years,  
 lighten aches and gaping wounds;  
 my mouth open, ready to suckle  
 and feed the life birthing from me.  
 Nothing fancy, these journal pages:  
 lined paper, spiral spine,  
 a Mead school notebook 6x9  
 to fit the life between  
 belly and leg. Each day's pages  
 absorbing shards and memories:  
 newspaper clips, reminders,  
 recollections. Each day ordered  
 on lines marching ragged  
 into morning's makeup:  
 the night-grit's jumble,  
 crossing the threshold  
 of was to is.

## Winter Dreaming

Morning uncoils itself from dreams,  
 snow drifts, and smoke.  
 Chimneys fill with stretches and farts,  
 black soot rising to leaden skies.  
 No beings stir.  
 A distant siren stamps warning  
 across quiet yards, walks through  
 windows, howls defeat  
 for someone's fearful absence.  
 Lazy mind meanders,  
 slow coffee wipes against night's crusts.  
 The furnace clicks, whooshes comfort.  
 And a winter morning  
 scrapes into life.

## Winter Fog

Fog captures the neighborhood  
caps a glove of silence  
over streets, weights the air  
in pallid gloom,  
and compresses sunrise  
into smoke.

### Fog

1. *condensed water vapor limiting vision*
2. *the second growth of grass on a mowed field; IE root pu*

Pu, the Vikings said to rotting sea grass  
exuding vapor in smelly clouds.  
Pe-uuuu, they said, nasty stuff,  
the word traveling through a haze  
of centuries from Indo-European meadows.  
Pu swelled, enveloped dragon-headed  
prows, pustules of stink to confuse  
the mighty warriors.

I take that as my comfort  
this foggy morning; this January fog  
lying over snow banks, white  
on white, confusing my memory.  
I've lost my dragon's head, lost  
the tongue of fire and the piercing eyes,  
cannot find my meandering way  
back to summer's grasses.

## Afternoon

I found the sun today,  
or it found me,  
winter dried and pale  
a wan summer daisy  
drooping in wool.  
I sat, the sun full on my face  
napped in a golden bed  
until, too soon, the cuddling orb  
slipped behind a roof edge,  
abandoning me to shadow.

## Planting Words

Blank lines  
and blank spots  
in my garden's winter-filled  
silence. If I click  
the font's re-do  
blue or green,  
will summer come  
to fill these quiet pages?

Cynthia

1948-2001

I am imagining you  
 rising from your sealed box,  
 lifting with your hands  
 filled with butterflies;  
 I imagine you turning,  
 your eyes curious  
 to see me watching you.  
 Look, you said, pointing  
 to a photo. Remember,  
 you said. That the final  
 dream in a line of dreams  
 as you climbed through  
 darkness. Now you rise,  
 as ephemeral in mist  
 as you were in life.  
 And I wonder in whose child  
 I will find your laughing eyes.

Son

*for Stephen*

Before you were  
 I knew you  
 knew the hump and twist  
 in my belly  
 as you turned in sleep  
 the way you turn now  
 coming slow  
 and backwards  
 into morning.

For Michael

You came through a dream -  
 holding something?  
 I don't know.  
 so I texted you this morning  
 to say hello  
 and you replied,  
 "You have a vision?"  
 Maybe, I don't remember.  
 Only my grandson,  
 grown to a man.

Cliff

1. *a high, steep or overhanging face of rock*
2. *my husband's name*

You held me from falling  
 far away, away from your hand,  
 your mouth, your heart.  
 I hid in the space between  
 rock and sky, buried or flying,  
 and you found me, wedged tight  
 and holding on.  
 You unloosed my fingers, one  
 by one, twined yours in mine,  
 one by one, led me to your safety.

## Winter #1

Like an old bear  
 I roll and turn,  
 seek heat from the body  
 near mine, fall asleep  
 again again and again  
 through the long snow  
 filled winter nights.  
 Spring will come  
 my husband tells me  
 as I jostle the cat  
 for a small patch of sun  
 near the kitchen window.  
 Tomorrow is February,  
 my husband says, drawing  
 me into his arm's heat.  
 One more month until March.  
 I roll and turn, grow  
 lean and hungry  
 and restless.

## Winter #2

My window frames an ice-silent morning:  
 silent pock-marked silver moon slices  
 the ice-gray sky; silent ravens lift from rooks  
 on silent wings across the skeletal oaks.  
 Today the final January morning;  
 tomorrow's only promise is one day  
 sooner to April, May, June, their green  
 and brown budding promise held in wait.

## Winter # 3

Dawn's light, filtered  
 by falling snow  
 gleams pearl-like,  
 luminous:  
 color to circle  
 a lady's throat  
 to shimmer on silk  
 and satin  
 elegant  
 untouchable  
 cold

## Winter #4

We're all cold:  
 birds, trees, houses  
 weighted with snow;  
 under the willow,  
 bare, exhausted,  
 two pink plastic flamingos  
 wait.  
 Drawing my red  
 fleece shawl  
 around my neck,  
 I brew tea  
 inhale green rising  
 as dried leaves  
 uncurl. A February  
 morning, three weeks  
 from March.

## Winter Sounds

a sparrow calls  
 waking  
 wind storms  
 in tree tops  
 the furnace sighs  
 a distant roar  
 of traffic  
 pen scratching  
 the cat sneezes  
 a plane crosses  
 high, fades,  
 the morning  
 ritual of sounds

## February Days

Spring inches into morning:  
 soft birds calls  
 dawn light  
 snow stuck in corners.  
 We peel ourselves  
 from winter cautiously  
 as if afraid  
 awakening won't last.

## An Effort of Survival

One squirrel, a branch,  
 a snowstorm whipping  
 from the north, one small  
 acorn, leftover  
 from a gentler season  
 between its paws,  
 and teeth,  
 offering succor.

## Ice Storm

Brittle as spun glass  
 the bare crowns of trees,  
 bare except for last night's ice,  
 grasp at sunlight, now rising  
 above the neighbor's house.  
 Three days of clouds, two of snow,  
 one with ice, leave angel eyes  
 on every twig  
 winking back at God

Things Back Home

*for Maril, vacationing in Mexico*

Power lines and bare tree  
 branches tangle my eyes  
 in shadow and shine.  
 As fast as the clouds move  
 so moves the vision:  
 a dove lands on a line  
 and sunlight flicks its tail;  
 branches shimmer in ice.  
 I have a movie here  
 beyond this shined-clean window  
 where I write. Or a moving  
 picture, the term appropriate  
 for tones of gray, white,  
 glimmering silver, black.  
 A cardinal's orange beak  
 stabs into frame, female,  
 young, still forming,  
 still finding her lonely way  
 amid winter branches and lines.

March First

I longed for you,  
 for the bright curl of light  
 tossing from your shoulders  
 and inflaming life with living.

I counted the days: three weeks,  
 two, five days, tomorrow you'll  
 come with your promise of ending  
 this winter clamping my breath.

And here you are, like other days,  
 sullen, gray; dirty snow  
 stacking the fence line  
 where your shoulder never goes.

## Speaking of Clouds

The morning clouds haze bare treetops.  
The weatherman would have a name for them,

Something more defining than haze or grim  
To call this morning's light into being.

No wind to speak of – I sound like a farmer –  
And pigeons hunched onto wires stay calm.

I keep waiting for gusting March winds  
To scrub the sky clean, polish the blue's

High sheen into enameled hard gloss  
And whip the last snow shards into memory.

I'm waiting for the lion's blast and roar  
To announce a springtime opening song

When cumulous ships – I know that name –  
Rise from the west to sail the ocean sky.

## Easter Monday

Spring rain tagged the heels  
of hail throbbing over our house roof.  
I woke, came to sit at my window,  
brew tea, watch the show.

But it stopped.  
And I sit in gray silk light  
waiting for a daybreak long past  
that will not come today.

The willow's branches, softened  
into leaf by three days of sun,  
frames its new green lace  
in the neighbor's purple budding tree.

For three days spring leaped into Easter,  
until now, exhausted from the effort  
since rebirth is never easy, it rests.  
This side of the window, I refill my cup.