

PALE THROAT

The mouths of birds are open to the air.
Inside my throat, the flapping of wings.
Inside I will sing.
I sing "tree," I think green.
I sing "blue," I think water.

The mouths of birds
asking to be fed, to pull the words
from my body. The words come
from a place where I'm broken
open like an egg.

The skin of my throat
stretched like a sheet
over a clothesline.
My pale throat captured
beneath the buttons of my blouse.

My throat moves the words
out covered in saliva.
My crush
collects the words
in his warm pocket.

Lifting the heavy bag of seed
from the open mouth of my grandfather's trunk.
We reach out to the birds.
It is what is done
when days become long.

A SONG ABOUT WHITE ASTERS
To Plach Yerepii

Those years were about cassettes
We got them on the street
Their cloudy cases
Spread out on a table
She would sit in her room alone
She she she

We would wind the ribbons
As we sang about the different apartments
I saw inside one in real life:
The rug was rolled up
And there was a pair of muddy shoes
There was a leak dripping

I bought a cassette player
At the department store
And we listened to them all
She she she
Was turning into me
I drank cheap wine

Alone on New Year's Eve
There was the smashing of glass
When someone got into an accident
Like transparent snow
On the dark concrete
As I listened to the tapes

THROUGH THE WALL

Place your body against the wall,
feel the body on the other side,
a warmth emanating,
feel the warmth in your body,
the tiny gasp
like a miniature rose between lips.
Otherwise, silence.

You measure his steps by their sound
and know how large his apartment is.
Your spaces are the same.
Yours is scattered
with the needles of a pine tree.
Yours is echoing
with holiday music.

You press harder.
You imagine yourself on the other side,
walking through a strange
kitchen, boiling water.
Then forgetting about it,
drinking lukewarm tea,
the tea bag dangling.

Your hair dangling.
He takes it into his hands.
His hands full of you.
His hands holding the space.