

Sigh:

It is the slice of the scythe
at the end of its arc
fluttering the seagrass.
It is the farmer finished with
his clearing, sitting on a painted stump
exhaling the milky sunset
his wife stares into from the kitchen
wanting him to love.
It is another bill grinning
with digits--and calendar still curling
from September, 1964.
It is the dead dog
crying in the woods at night,
the ring of a phone
muffled under velvet drapes. It is
the breath of what was.

You wait

for morning before sun breaks,
for the omen of breezes
to squirrel up the canal.
On the opposite bank
fields of mustard asters blaze--
all pinwheels and pom-poms and seeds
floating in a haze--
and sigh in one chorus,
thousands of petals grazing each other
like mourners in a congregation
as the casket passes.

New Love

 Spring
burst early. The urgent
 inarticulate
 sprout of leaves

drowned
 the stippled light
of questions: why,
 who else,

tirade of no's
 like drops
 after rain.

 Clusters of crocii
pushed through
 scabs of snow—

the first reprieves
 of white, mauve
 & yellow

ushering the hiss
 of sun-burning mist
 and prisms'
 corollaries:

hesitant hyacinths,
 blush sunrise
 turning eggshell
 blue, shadows

grazing in folds
 of gauze curtains
 drawn like a thin
 skin over branches

 budding,

Sky Cathedral

- For Louise Nevelson

We enter the bath of platinum light
in the museum, echoing like an open
grave, the unsettled dust sparkling.

An assemblage rises from its plinth—
crystal doorknobs affixed to the knee
of the bevelled door, slathed in black.

Wooden spindles spiral sideways into
the maple legs of a baby's chair, and no
forgiveness for the dismembered table,
dowels removed from their snug holes.

Enjambed shards of balsa still coated
in sawdust absorb our whispers' tangle,
as we strain to decipher this collision.

Where are the bodies who loved among
the obelisk bed posts? The sated heir
who embroidered in this oak recliner?

Boxes stack, like the closet of the orphan
who covets bookless bookends, one shoe,
spade of an iron of the mother he feared.
We peer down a keyhole to pooling stars.

We want the clues: the murderer's cloak,
his smirk, the artist's brush and janitor's
broom. We want the rain of sorry harps.

We want the opera in the grain of wood
rubbed by the artist to a ghost of itself
under the matte varnish, erasing the pain.