

Written in Code

1

In this family, favorites are chosen
provisionally. Songbirds startled

skyward (*you did this*). If you can't
open the bottle, you can break its neck.

There's *overlanguage* and *under-*
language; there's a trapdoor

to the cellar. The diary cryptogram
is a six-letter shift. When you lift the lid,

the box is empty. Try to believe every
story as if you'd written it yourself.

2

A code imagines a triangle:
the message moves from *A* to *B*

and there's an *eavesdropper* (this
metaphor hides her in gloom,

at the edge of everything – but, oh,
it's possible to listen in a staggering

number of ways). The triangle recalls
a covert romance; or a family. Often,

the very fact of the message conveys,
first, the sender's wish to remain alive.

Signs & Omens

1

Textbook open to a hand –
something like a hand:

bones of a now extinct, a lost
and unknowable creature.

The rain has finally stopped;
now the flood. Tide so high

waves roll – *roaring* – through
the empty intersection (no one

for miles). Everything is hunted.
I mean *everything is haunted*.

2

Silver bow keys without a ring. And
the enduring habit: hand where

collarbones join (where breath,
where beat: *again again again*).

We're all there in the elevator when
it starts going down. I put one key

in my mouth; my tongue will
know it. What does it mean when

desire is riven with qualification
already when you name it?

3

The cup is kilnburnt, melancholy
blue; empty with an emptiness
that is not vacancy.

Displacing
air around it, the cup commands
reach and eye; it shapes my thinking
(*heft and distance*).

I'm talking

about how we see (that is, how
we find each other; how we know
ourselves).

I'm talking about
singularity: this one and not another.