**on teaching**  
  
1.   
look how my hands spin   
like loose weather vanes   
who totter and rattle   
amidst Noah’s flood, Moses’s plague   
look how my hands stretch  
like stalwart weather vanes  
who forever crane their necks  
in search of discernment

2.   
this life isn’t getting any cheaper  
and I’m not getting any younger  
wide-eyed at a booth among kings  
out of the trodden street snow  
and into squinted clinking melancholy  
I want scallops in Soho  
and warm bread  
it’s beautiful in here  
it sure is something

3.   
I’m wearing the hello my name is teacher  
and the amount of hiding  
between the student’s desks and   
what keeps me upright  
is the length of the Nile  
which my students will tell you   
is the largest river in the world

4.   
in 7th Grade, my teacher’s name was Mrs. Mobel  
and we always knew, even at our cusps  
that she was shaking the edges of her life  
in order to hear it hit the wind

**fox hunt**

close to my cheek  
I could see your lips  
close to my nose   
mouthing to the band playing below us   
  
in the very dark   
lips only made visible by movement  
oh isn’t everything?  
oh isn’t it all?

I’ve thought about science  
the way I’ve thought about planets  
the way I’ve thought about your breasts  
and how low they hang  
  
I’ve concluded that motion  
is light is integral to seeing  
aren’t we taught to play dead?  
like soldiers, red foxes   
  
rabbits too  
now you see them--  
stop, freeze within the trees  
--now you don’t   
  
vanished into earth, stone, green…   
a tail twitch—the dead rise!   
a fatal cough—look, there, in the trees!  
the reveal, the revelation  
  
taunting  
like a language you can’t speak  
like Kurdish, I don’t speak that  
like Latin, like the Cantonese   
  
written on Canal Street signs  
we passed on our way back from the concert   
we walked together hand in lively hand  
  
I don’t speak Cantonese  
I’m not in love with you  
  
it’s okay sometimes  
not to understand  
  
the morning thaws  
and so do we  
I, first, arched out of sleep  
draw myself into being  
  
with the colors of my movement  
the cold floor of your apartment  
sticking to my feet  
like gravel in childhood knees  
  
grown now, sheathed in jeans  
and the zipper on my dress  
goes up like the sun  
and temperature  
  
and you, when you wake  
a red fox  
  
I can spot you now  
within the trees  
your mouth moves again  
you come alive in front of me

**curdle**  
  
you probably already know. I am a children’s book of shapes. I am no onion. I have no idea, anymore, the kind of paper doll I am but I am fairly certain I am in my underwear and no, I don’t want to get dressed. Come fuck me instead. Whisper “I’m not going to break up with you” again. I have made you my illness. It passes the time. Like turning the light switch off and on. I want to tell you that I’m starting to love you in the worst way, a dragon. Of fucking compassion. The panic is climbing up my back now. I’m trying, but I’m typhoid. You are trying, but you’re jail break. Or, you are a villain in a story that I made up   
 you are actually the hero I am the villain I am yanking your curtain cord, open, open, open for me. If only I would. Leave you be.   
You don’t want can’t stand expectation.   
 My hope like plastic straws in your throat.   
It’s a recipe from my mother. Add coriander. I fear every word that comes out of my mouth will be a bomb lit by the words I’m sorry. And I am. We are breaking and I’m just matilda-ing at the vase, willing it to splinter on the desk, just go ahead already, just put your fist down, I’ve got the basket ready, we all know what’s about to drop and it’s an anvil of a sentence that has been in the sky since we joined hands under it during a moment of optimism. It’s all in our heads, baby. Every time I email you my lungs .   
 Don’t give me silence.   
 I am sicker than you. Let’s make it a contest. The winner gets to wait.

**practice your scales**loose lips sink ships   
mother may I rock twist this  
back teeter forth totter  
dip my tips in blank blue water  
(or dip inside you in pleasure slaughter)  
making an impress-ion   
inden-tion   
right below your left eye, I  
watch your face ripple   
across the wide concrete tide

I know you have to leave soon—  
I just want to add a teaspoon  
to your tea   
a sort of "for a good time/ Sam loves Ashley/but Ashley's a cunt"   
in the dead salmon stall door,   
if you will. Will you?   
a mere marked stretching  
innocent etching  
on this puppy dog kicking plan-et  
want you not to rest lest  
  
you forget I'm in-it, till   
ooh ouch frick! Frack!   
fingers caught cold   
in the atlantic crack, but  
the boat keeps sailing  
like my persistent sick song on failing,   
as my little armie   
in my sleevie  
(George Washington, retrieve me)  
is bereftly cleft, adieu adieu

just like losing you.

I can squint against the squalor   
of blinging blanging UV, the kind you'll see   
singeing the blinds in the proverbial parlor  
wish I could wave one last woebegone holler   
to the lost limb now somehow floating   
in the beliefs, misquotings   
of each another, ohh step-brother

whole soul granolas make a puzzle of me  
--boring kids, they do shitty puzzles for fun

rather have a shoot your eye out bubub bb gun--  
their snotty germy jazz hands a-razzin, "you  
cubist eludist harmless swarmless derang-ed, strange-or!"  
“Fuck you,” I bark, “you can't take candy from me!”  
which is a shattering shoot down to someone (20) three  
na na na na na talk to the hand  
—but balls! I've oops britneyed again  
turned into a doofy dolly dog  
burned the bridges I jolly jog  
by opening my flap trap  
now I'm stagnant stalled

you never called

at the veering edge of the cliff clap clopper clop  
I drop roll and stop before I topp-  
-le my mouth over the sunny side of sacrifice   
on my knees foaming eyes apologize  
should've thought of this sooner  
dear Josh full of grace…  
and here it comes, a messianic schooner   
I'll commit my afterlife to, yes I'll willingly do  
it if they feed me cracker jacks candle wax  
jacks thrittle my neat little nose  
because as the saying goes  
loose lips left  
on the clopping cliff behind  
are the willy nilly buzzing silly   
very bestest kind.

**blew/ue**

after you blew my house down  
you patted my arm through the phone  
softly shrugging  
your wizened advice:   
if I’d stop spending time with wolves  
I’d have so many more houses

and all I could do   
was let my indignation  
pool in my throat  
then spit to the floor  
a meager fist of words,   
accusing you of condescension  
you responded you were sorry  
I felt that way   
and I was too

you are sorry  
the house  
happened to fall down  
from the blowing  
you are not sorry  
you are never sorry  
you blew

and you did blow  
I mean that the way  
7th graders talk about a history test  
or a missed free throw  
something they did their best at  
but all for naught  
  
yeah, like that  
you blew a lot

**excavation**

I sometimes wish if you’d asked me if you’d asked me I could have just told you   
with the door of my mouth and cave sound that, dear, I don’t need to be your other either, your significant, your yours. You wouldn’t have believed me but it’s true, I am an installation. Different in a garage than in a warehouse than in the MoMa. What I mean is as a picture I adjust to the frame. What I mean is I’m much more capable of promiscuity of NSA of distance than you think I am, of expanding, of loving you on the margins of our lives. I only want to know if it’s going to rain so I can bring my umbrella. What to expect. A course breakdown. Class on Tuesdays 2-4 and Thursday 2-4. The first time you pushed me back from you you you told me this feels like it’s going to be a relationship. I wasn’t sharp enough at the time to remind you that everything already is. You said then you don’t seem like someone who wants to have casual sex. Didn’t seem like. Honey. You should see my dating profile. Sure, I was childlike around you. That’s just the medusa of vulnerability, some people turn to stone and others, infants. Didn’t seem like. Honey! You didn’t seem like someone who would come back in a year to tell me you loved me and then dip roll out of the moving car you were driving but. We are surprises. We are predicted. Honey! You called to me as I almost got off the train at the wrong stop. The last time you said I don’t want to be someone’s girlfriend. I was slipping on my silence and fighting to pull cotton frustration out from my throat and only after I hung up did I cough did I want to scream: me neither! The world is flush. We had other choices. Sometimes when I’m on 6th Avenue or on Franklin Avenue or in my own bathroom I think, you must have felt like I was chasing you with a pillow and a Greek tragedy. But then, all we did was fall into each other in fireworks, screech, then weekly talk on the phone. I didn’t, like, propose. I did not duct tape my finger to your doorbell. I can’t know how it felt to you but I (think I) know what I did and that was merely try to reach across a widening gulf because I loved you and baby, sorry if you hate that, but I feel an urge to keep reminding you that you sent me an invitation to your new year’s party you asked me back! say yes elliot smith! and I signed my name and bippity boppity here we are and oh, yes, I was saying I had strict instructions to stay landlocked while the water lapped my legs except when you called my name. After it all, though, after it all! My anger is so turbulent, it picks up speed and bullet points. I’m making a case for no one. Order in the court. Oh, remember when we went to court? You liked to buy me candy that day, I’m still picking it out of my teeth. But then I think, my only sin was not saying: What is going on?Direct communication fails in the face of a flailing heart-like-snotty-child throwing a tantrum in the grocery story. Did I want to scream: yes. Fear had me locked in myself. That paint’s not on you. I sometimes wish   
 if you’d asked me if you’d asked me I could have just told you   
we could have just been tangential lovers. Ellipsis at the ends of sentences. Peripheral, but sweet. I was going to tell you but your monologue ate mine. It was your participation I wanted not your stay. And I didn’t get to say: no, they’re not exclusive. I can be scarce and find freedom there. I am doing that now. No one hangs their hat on me except for those I’ve given hats and hooks, and that’s the point, baby. I’m not so different from you. My skin crawls at loud noises I love like an orchestra I still want to be left alone most of the time. What did you think I wanted? What did I think you wanted? Maybe we did our best, but I can’t get over what feels like the useless rot of seeds that were going to be trees. It didn’t matter what kind. My therapist says I am negotiating with a ghost: now I’m writing to one. You have thought it to death. It is CPR. This is one more way.