

Investigating Nature

I take fresh, sharp pencils, prepare
To write those strange words
Taught in class, like
Recombination transduction transformation
That squeezed into unwilling ears
In those eternal millenias

I know that Science meant no harm, and yet
I could not help the lights blinking
On my screen,
Distractive, alarming.
Why couldn't Science allow these bugs,
trapped by four-eyed gangly boys with bad breath
Suddenly grown up,
To float to freedom-
The jar's cap, once loosened, restoring my mind
To its natural state?
Only yesterday...

Outside my window
A black-capped chickadee above the glittering snowbanks
Grasps a diamond-shaped sunflower seed from
The flowing stack of seeds,
Flits to a near bare branch,
Holds the seed between bare-knuckle toes and
Pecks at the hard shell which,
Fallen away,
Reveals white, juicy meat.
I put on my boots
And outside net the quietly protesting bird.
I clutch it in shivering barehands,
Lean over, squint
And yell with pain
As it lunges and attacks my thumb's quick.

Before yesterday,
Before the slap of the first, delivered moment,
A gloved hand holding it
Glistening and bursting
With the first, churning cry,
This Da Vinci's perfect creation
Carried under wraps, revealed with a flourish
To tears and gasps-

There was no one to explain our birth.
The essence of our being
Remained intractably hidden.

Heiraceum, Pisum, Sativum,
All the seekers' plants
Dissected or ingested,
Polymorphisms carving out their special niche.
Analysis is a manifold duress
Of being drawn and quartered.
The scientist's eye, appearing
Swollen through its glass monocle,
Watches the planted jackfruit ripen and turn
According to plan.

To which garden, I supposed,
should I make my address-
The tendriled soul of wisteria climbing,
Ineffably sweet,
Or the clockwork mathematics of the sun?
Each has its rise and set, purple clouds
Drifting across...

And again I snap back to the present
With its scratching of pencils,
Threatening to leave me as I sit
With chin resting on this exam booklet,
Its ruled lines looking altogether
Empty and untouched
As a thousand-year-old wind blows across my neck.