**Prayer**

At this edge (must be), the altar of the world
(Given), a pile of words & significances tight
As houses, light-ambushed & rain-cohered,
I invoke your pure delight & luminosity, boy
In a red jacket, registering as both breath &
Emergency, as the bus dips—sideways—
Into the three o’clock road. See you neither
Falling nor swimming in the fog, simply,
Standing & staring with no heft of purpose,
Just gazing, marvelously, letting time precipitate
As your slow body tilts toward the dissolved:
Landscape bereft of contradictions. I call to you
Instead of the muse, not just because we share
The same millennium, the same hollowed-out
Clouds of the unhinged city, but because—
Let me put it this way: You venerate lostness.
You know how to stop, & stopping, the blur
Is summoned from the details, & the unknown
Rolls like the spokes of white wheels, &
Something gets polished inside you & what shines
Is a small, incalculable belief in the little bit.
This morsel is what sustains me so the words
May come with blood in them—reprehensible,
Inert in many ways, hopefully human. As for you:
A revelation of salt, earth & the curved sky
Hiding beneath all this white. So bless me.
Restore me to my edgedness. Intervene
Against the wind shutting down the flames &
The roses in my head. As soon I hit forehead
Against the page, you should have known:
That I write because you exist on the other side,
Smoldering with a life that stays put (the way
You want it) complete & incomparable
In the total mist, needing me not one bit.

Diva

Whoever denies this world and wishes for another one—
Less mattered, light-lifted—is committing a serious mistake.
How can you, for the sweet aching life of you, unravel a river
Which is a scarf studded with sequins or dismantle the threads
Of winter evoked as a white coat the elms don with such élan?
Each time you caress petals and poems, are you not simply
Reaching out to softness, to brightly-colored words,
The rainbowed stones scattered in the inside sleeve of earth?
Even angels and saints can be found in every drifting snow,
On the windowpane to which a child has intimated his breath,
The kingdom of smoke in each blown city. Ice is absolute—
The transparent architecture of water—as well as our bodies.
What we call morning is not a state of mind but really light
About to cascade on the flowing robes of oceans and ranges.
Things need not be anointed: from the brief blue flame
To the raging meteorite, from the fire-orange cat in the kitchen
To the mauve-plumed birds heading towards the certainty
Of summer. Oh, how definite is the lightbolt, the metals
Of scissors, the red velvet carpet the autumn spreads out
As death, magnificent in his blind horse, gallops along.
Surface is all: mineral, fur, shimmer, gold, feather, snakeskin,
Even blood spilled declares its valid intentions. We walk
On grounds impeccable as gravity which licks every apple
About to fall or not. Why not lean your body towards
The clap of thunder, the rumor of waves? Why not delight
In lush, in rough and tumble, in tough and order? After all,
The arrogance of things visible is unshameable, insisting
Its accordions, its agendas, its army of knives. I can’t
Understand this wish for the beyond when the beyond
Is merely a set of brandished new conditions, a country
With eloquent churches and people with flawless smiles.
We are meant to tumble outwards: words and orgasms.
Spilling, somersaulting, securing, our thoughts don’t service
Untouchable palaces; our tongues pay more homage to skin
Than gods. Hospitable heaven is mankind’s greatest fallacy.
Here is the only world, the adorable queen we love, until
We shed our sensation-drenched bodies and off we swim
Back to a womb, stalactite-cool, dripping, without exit.

**Fashionista’s Soliloquy of a Landscape**

Yes, it’s gorgeous—gorgeous in such a way
That you don’t have to insert anything more.

If you do, the landscape, the tilted horizon,
Would look less pretty like a vase of severely cut,

Immaculately pruned daffodils. If only they were
Let to wear the robes they were born with, their heads

Would be shining, like the sun above this,
Only more ... scintillating. But some pruning,

Some gentle revision of the land would not be
Such a bad idea, like the notion of eternal delight.

Perhaps, some further depth of color at the margin,
Some more fire in the pines will do. Or maybe,

The clouds could hang low, bruise the tip
Of the mountain which, oddly, is chiseled
In such a way that the left slope looks like
Cragged ladder, broken teeth, an angle of anguish.

Oh, if only the angels in their flawlessness
Could come down and airbrush it, perhaps,

We would be closer to heaven, applepie-scented
And white as unbruised light. Unlike here,

Where the light dripping in some concealed corners
Of the sky, makes shadows appear impotent,

All those huddling ghosts at the center
Of what can only be called a brief apparition

Of civilization. Who was it, the Chinese philosopher
Who hazarded, *You can't add anything more*

*To the universe?* What does thought serve
If not to disrupt the sluggish flow of matter,

To manicure nature, to let scenes such as this
Become digital camera-perfect because

Our comment bears the brunt of how things
Should be perceived? Isn’t the world

A made-over home? If only a road well-paved
Snakes from there and gets lost somewhere

The landscape would have been more *suitable*
And I will soak it all, calling it a fabulous idea.

**Garment**

*After Portrait of Adele Bloch Bauer I by Gustav Klimt*

There are women inseparable from their garment
As if the threads had been worked into their entire being
And the body has no choice but to convey solely surface,
Spun gold and ornamented silver such as in the case
Of Adele Bloch-Bauer, a glittering fish of a woman,

Her hair one concluding motion of the drowned. Look at her
And see what Klimt had probably visualized in his mind
Amid a background of disintegrating copper: neck
Waylaid by metal, necessarily so, in order that the wrist
May bend at an angle and all the slim fingers ringed

With nothing are entangled into a gesture of madness,
One entire braceletled arm kept close to the side so that
What should be unsaid may remain unsaid because
Life is one complete loop whose center is silence. The feet
Are honorably absent, understandably so, because

The painting is not sprung from the earth but from
The froth of the invisible, what the scattering regime
Of light has left behind—flecks and spirals, perfect
Geometries of occurrences—leading one to think
That she is exactly where she should be, at the dull,

Corroding tip of history. Her skirt spilling into isosceles,
The warp and weft of her fixity, she is not, however,
Forever unshameable despite the lips that may betray so.
Witness the slow corruption of the skin as though
Her blood, at this very instance, is tainted with rust,

Or perhaps it’s just meant to mimic gold because
The flesh is as unstable, has its own boiling point.
No matter, there are consumptions that are inevitable,
And not all sadesses are diagonal like rain. Her gaze,
Underlined by ailment, is at once certain and insistent,

And what happened between her death and this event
Is nothing but the polite gesticulation of the self. What
Will triumph is not art but the shiny foil that wraps it:
The portrait, stolen by the Nazis and restored to her
Familiar, was sold for a princely sum. She must be proud.