

## The Possibility Witch

This convexed love a rearview mirror  
fixed on negative space

stars turned inside out  
subjects closer than they are

fish heads on the half shell  
blind luck in the southcoast sun

roller coaster skeleton  
a carnival of old thrills

funhouse a vacant lot  
where the midway was

*mission viejo* doves and swallows  
last stop before the border

a soft lens on the pupil's black hole  
a no services rest stop

quantum entanglement  
right around the next bend

\*

After sunrise mantra on Second Mesa  
and finding Joe, my faithful Russian Blue  
fellow traveler at his own ritual —  
four baby cottontails laid out  
in parallel pointing from him to the sun —  
drove south on 87 until I saw  
a dirt road heading off into a cornfield.  
Leaving Joe in the pickup, I followed the road  
to where an old Indian woman stood waiting.

*You want corn* she said in a matter of fact voice,  
a statement as much as question. I nodded yes.  
She went behind the cabin and came back  
with three ears — red, white, yellow.  
I gestured with open palms and puzzled look.  
She handed me the corn, went behind the cabin  
and this time came back with the blue one.  
I accepted it with a thank you and bow,  
walked back to the pickup and headed south.

\*

Eyes blue gray green as ocean waves  
catching the sun, hands quiet as silhouettes  
razor-thin-wings above the palms in dawn pastels  
teasing out what was there to be said without words

\*

Yet Further  
north of language  
schools and Bolinas

a busload of heads  
profiles  
in tinted windows

odd hours  
cuckoo clock  
times of departure

gift of gab  
behind the wheel  
navigating

no hopalong  
or butch but blarney  
in a cowboy hat

picturesque  
place names  
picaresque lives

washed up  
between between  
and nowhere

pulled over  
for of all things  
going too slow

in the beginning  
desire not instinct  
but drive she said

\*

Next stop  
Here Now  
On or Off

\*

Beef-to-heel to Connemara curls  
cloverleafs all over the map

whistling swans and Uileann pipes  
air translucent wavering

where all roads lead to *amor inanis*  
calling on those in the land of the dead

\*

Mountaintop islands in a sea of cloud

vermillion memories of the sun  
the air all but palpable  
your voice the breath I breathe

\*

Offwhite stucco ceiling writhing  
Celtic puzzles and Chinese knots  
philodendra fractaling  
across a bonewhite wall

You someone else entirely  
yet someone I'd known  
as in the mirror I wasn't.  
Bach made it all reasonable

\*

As things begin to define themselves  
out of the animal darkness you  
as usual disappear leaving only  
the sense of you here and the phoebe  
outside rehearsing his plaintive refrain

\*

You came in wearing a mask  
the color of invisible

Where your eyes should have been  
all I saw was the open door behind you

When your voice without a mouth  
said *Am I too late?*

I answered *Are you out of your mind?*  
then asked myself the same question

\*

Past tense past perfect to be exact you  
all but vanished at the gamebird refuge  
in a yellow-headed icterid murmuration  
which surrounded you with a tumult of wings

\*

High on a windmill crow's nest  
surrounded by possibilities  
in an angle iron skeleton  
blades overhead mincing the moonlight  
the wellpipe at the center between us  
the air cooled down by propriety

\*

No, no, I take it all back,  
that couldn't have been you with the bronze sickle  
prowling the Navarro redwoods

or light as a feather in the Berkeley Hills  
Tenderloin Mission Dolores  
Land's End group grope

eyes aflame when that Big Sur  
restaurant refused to serve  
you and your ragtag family

or skirting miles of sheer death-wish  
at the edge of the old haul road  
high above the lost coast

smooth as a sylph between crossbow  
William Tells on electric wine  
and boys with beercans on their heads

or gamboling with lambs on the Scotia headlands  
sapphire eyes too ancient to bear  
looking into for fear of drowning

curls redhot as fiddle strings  
holding your own with old timers  
your chosen dead drunk at your feet

or by the hearth with cat and harp  
plucked wires conjuring up  
airs forlorn and melancholy

grocerycart bag lady  
ensorcelling Kwikstop gas pumps  
with blue streak logorrhea

or dancing solo in a beachtown bar  
pretending to see only one eye  
pinned on your every move

or grocerycart bag lady  
ensorcelling Kwikstop gas pumps  
with blue streak logorrhea

hand in hand walking the dunes  
dark night winter squall  
tracks dissolving in wet sand

or under the space needle umbrella  
more than enough show and tell  
masochism to go around

\*

And north of all that a little café,  
unsmiling eyes on mie you said  
*I'm burning a hole in the seat of his chair*

July, sky severe clear, the pulsing

a shingle beneath the old-growth,  
cobble and wave call and response,

pterodactylan pelicans  
single file skimming the surface  
pebbles singing in tongues in the backwash

*O god Omigod*  
you cried again and again and again  
our first time together again

\*

The best ever you said was on his Harley,  
head down behind the windshield, the hog's  
signature *suck-squeeze-bang-and-blow*  
between your thighs the two of you  
leaning into the hairpin curves coming  
down the long grade from the high country

\*

In your more sentimental moods  
you liked to visit that old graveyard  
too high on the bluff to hear  
waves slapping the rocks below,  
gravestones too weathered to read and one  
with a hole through the granite and on either side  
windowglass circles so you can see her heart  
once loved and loving now shriveled and black

\*

Something like ectoplasm  
another bodily fluid  
superfine subtle  
next to nothing at all  
left in me like a ghost  
of everything I am

\*

*It won't be long now* said the gray lady,  
dustmop in one hand  
the other under the bedclothes  
*her feet, poor thing, already cold*  
*and that's where it begins*

\*

Contact lens in too long:  
eyeballs bloodshot  
white matter in the tear ducts  
— *as long as it's not green pus* said the eye-doc  
*but give it a rest, don't set your beams*  
*too high, quit trying to tell what you see*  
*with only one eye on the road*  
*from what you're looking at or for*

\*

I-10 Shamrock Texas  
bitter cold blizzard night  
hiking back east to try to make peace  
between my mother and grandmother  
while there was still time

A white El Dorado pulled up  
under the truckstop arc lamps.  
When I opened the door you motioned me  
to put my pack in the back seat  
and sit up front in the heater's warmth

In the blue glow of the dash and headlights  
reflected back in off the snow,  
the most beautiful woman I'd ever seen:  
high cheekbones, long hair, turquoise,  
your very presence a radiance.

Hours and few words later  
under a truckstop arc lamp  
outside OK City  
your smile said fare well  
your lights disappeared in the snow

\*

Midnight the middle of nowhere  
high desert backcountry blacktop  
still wet from late afternoon showers,  
down the road ahead a myriad  
of red lights dancing in the darkness  
(*For sure nothing human* you said)  
that when we stopped turned out to be  
thousands of newborn spiders clinging  
to wisps of gossamer shroud lines  
suspended from the darkness above,  
their spectral red lunatic eyes  
refracted by our headlights,  
drifting west in the humid air

\*

Betwixt the two say Quakers  
is where love is

Between *yin* and *yang* is *ch'i*  
says the *I Ching*

\*

And there were deer in the old orchard  
does and fawns and they came to you

and you gave them windfall apples,  
stroked their foreheads with your fingertips

and they nuzzled your palm then we  
walked back to the car without a word

\*

Black silver tarnish luster  
precious as polished splendor

Milk-blue moon so thin  
the sky behind it bled through

\*

Oedipus you may have noticed  
has precious little to do with this  
despite your proclivities  
my sibling fantasies

the Sphinx even less, though  
riddle-me-this love poems  
with a vengeance do pose questions that forever  
plague family romance

\*

Speaking of love  
tongue in cheek  
a permanent wink

*Walked away*  
*from another one*  
said the brakeman