

Notes Toward a Thank You

Illegible ledger scrawled on the walls
of the mind's interior, unseen but seen *to*
and shaping as a place makes nexus
of the prior and the next,
its grace suspended in an amber
chamber, praises pressed as flowers
in chapters of rising action and falling,
expressed in the rising and falling
of the sleeping chest after endurance—
you can have the rest—or ink if we take
cardstock manners over mind
and think to thank indelible.
Excess can be gratitude, as can
restraint. I left some
pastry on your porch. I left
some flowers in a former marinara jar.
I don't expect you to keep them forever.
I don't expect them to keep. I took
a roadside spectrum out of context,
ditch lilies whose unfurling says:
can't help ourselves from blooming
so please help yourselves
to us too. This bursting at as if all else
were seams, field sown to open,
reveling in its unraveling.
Earlier I felt past try, I felt flow errs,
but routine is a route in—I stand by it.
Tangled in lines rapt in the net,
votive's motive meaning now's avowal,
and the dough risen *to* as if today
were the occasion, something
still sweeter at its center.

These poems incorporating the theme of gratitude were written in celebration of The Englert Theatre in Iowa City and read at the October 2014 event "Celebrating Local: 10 Years of the New Englert."