

enough to be and perfectly to be  
(even as any saint or angel must)  
the full, proliferating,  
and ever-multifarious proof  
of exactly that measure given

### ON BEING EATEN ALIVE

You know the most terrifying ways—giant fish,  
reticulate python, saber-toothed cat,  
army ants by the hundreds, piranha  
by the scores. One can imagine  
being scarlet in the blood  
of a lion or rolled as pellets  
in a wolf's belly or ossified  
in the barrelled bones  
of a grizzly bear.

There are those who have been snatched  
away without leaving a trace  
into the flames (efficient bowels)  
of a pine forest on fire or a burning  
barn in August and those  
who have been taken on rough tongues  
of salt, smothered and lost  
in a cavern full of sea.

I have seen others disappear  
without a cry, wholly ingested,  
limbs and hair and voice,  
swallowed up irretrievably  
by the expanding sac  
of insanity.

But I like to think  
of that old way, the most common  
and slowest, the body disassembled,  
diffused, slowly, consumed—particle  
by particle, stigma, gradually, by stigma,  
cell by cell—converted carefully, transfigured,  
transformed, becoming finally both  
a passing grain of blue above an early  
evening silhouette of oaks and an inflation  
of sun in low October fog, both the sight  
of bladed wind in beach grasses  
and the sound of singing in the wings  
of desert bats, becoming as close  
to itself as the smooth night skin  
lining the skull, as the white moaning  
conch of its own hearing, the body  
becoming gradually and remarkably  
so indisputably so.

#### WHAT THE SUN GOD SAW ONE SUMMER AFTERNOON

Looking long enough, right before his eyes  
he saw the sheaths of leaf and tassel  
and stem split and fall, layer  
after layer, like transparent skins  
from around each stalk, until all the barley  
and rushes stood complete and naked,  
a thousand narrow blades of white fire  
bending and shimmering across the field.

And the smooth asters and sweet clovers,  
releasing their outer shells of texture  
and fragrance and color, became small perpetual  
explosions poised on their glowing stems  
in the dazzling roadside ditches.