

so much pretty blue smoke and mirrors. . . .
And let's have no more kneeling
for good reasons, dropping God's name
like a cast iron doorstep,

forcing Him into the shape of a tree,
say, which would much rather go on treeing.
Let's sit down at the table, and eat.
Pass the chicken, sauteed with onions,

pass the broccoli, its green aroma
curling from the plate. Pass the boiled
red potatoes that slice open
with warm sighs. Pass the spring

water and the wine, the butter and the pepper.
Quiet the children according to their
needs. Quiet the radio and TV, all appliances
of confusion, of *I will never solve these*

too painful and unending sorrows. Quiet
your opposite, as well as he or she
may be comforted. Quiet, quiet your own famished
heart. Let us fill ourselves in silence.

PRAYER TO WASP ON THE OCCASION OF ITS EXECUTION

You entered my face
like a whore's nails,
blew the skin out
red and dangerous
as a balloon
filled with gas.
Twelve years old,
I lurched
home, new pennies

slid from my jeans
ticking the side-
walk. Friends
dropped their mitts
and stared.
Only creature
I still kill,
prying your stucco
nests from rafters,
hearing the sound
of your body
breaking underfoot—
brittle, crushed
paper flower—
forgive this un-
redeemable
vengeance. Today
your descendant
enters through a hole
in the screen,
slow and fumbling,
falls off
the sill to my
desk. I will send
him back to God
using the sonnets
of Frederick
Tuckerman, an old
favorite, sad
lush lines to a dead
wife. Please convey
my regrets
to the Absent One—
I have not loved
all, or enough
without words,
lies or poisoned
hesitations.
Have mercy on me.