

sailed up to the edge of the earth and discovered
the earth had no edge after all. I imagine them
clinging to the rails, shutting
their eyes and laughing
when they found themselves floating
instead of falling.
They went on sailing.
We went on talking. "A little farther,"
you said, and I went on.
We ran our hands along the seam.
You stared at me thinking if only you looked
hard enough, it would all come clear.
I walked out.
I came back.
You said, "Let's talk about it."
We went on talking.
It was as if we thought we lived
in some other world, a world where
when lungs fail, the people learn
some other way to breathe.
Imagine, in need of air, your hands opening up
to do the work your lungs have ceased to do.
I would hold my new hands
up into the light. I would place them
against my ears and listen
to the air lacing in and out of the web
between my fingers. Imagine how careful I'd be
carrying those new hands
wherever I went.

BAY MARE IN A SECOND FLOOR BEDROOM

In my dream of the last day, a large bay horse
followed me into my house and up the stairs.
The horse stood quietly behind me as I gathered
my possessions: ice-cream bars, cigarettes,

notebooks. What I was going to do
with 6 boxes of chocolate covered ice-creams
and 10 packs of cigarettes on the last day, I don't
know, and I didn't know what I was going to do
with the notebooks, bury them, or take them with me?
What is it you're supposed to do on the last day?
I was glad the horse was there. I would take
one last ride, swing up on her back, no saddle,
no bridle, gallop off across the field. For once
I knew exactly what I was going to do, and it didn't bother
my mother or anyone else that the horse was in the house,
floor-boards creaking beneath her hooves.
It was the last day and we all knew it.
I had been at work when it started. We saw missiles
lift off out of the hill, American flags
draped across each one. None of us knew how much time
was left, and none of us knew what to do with the children
in our charge. "Excuse us please," we said, "We're sorry,
it's time. Put up your chairs, go home, good-bye."
Everyone climbed from the windows. Like small streams of light
beneath a blank blue sky, we all ran wherever
we needed to run. I went home and the bay mare followed me
up the stairs, stood still behind me as I dug through my papers.
I went to the window. I saw the ocean
lifting itself. The water was black, and for some reason,
it made no sound. I saw a friend of mine
climb into a small white boat and push out into the waves.
She'd told me I shouldn't worry about her any longer.
"Don't bother calling," she had said.
There was no sound, only the white wind
cupped in the white sail, the white boat
cupped in the curl of a 60 foot wave.
It was the last day.
We did what we could.