

the body's parts snuggled together  
to make one multiple thing.

I blame it all  
on St. Paul. And Plato,  
whose philosophy of the air Nietzsche  
called 'the higher swindle,' and  
it was, the best shell game in town,  
until Jesus raised mouldering Lazarus  
whose stench blew through mainstream Christianity  
like a bad fix, a jolt to stiffen the veins.

That's why a statue is a soothing thing,  
why we pray to them and erect them in cemeteries  
and put them on courthouse lawns, all the juices  
that make us go, frozen on the spot,  
the same each time we pass.

I could watch a great piece  
of sculpture all day, planted root-like  
on a concrete bench, my blood slowing  
and turning to sand, my eyes smoothing, I  
commanding the mutable world, a stone sword  
at my side, my stallion caught bolt  
upright, for at least a thousand years.

### ST. THERESA'S

Stuffed into layers of wool,  
we sledded in lucky winters over the hills  
to the school that lay at the bottom  
of a small scooped-out valley,  
enclosed by a Cyclone fence, with no horizons  
to give children's minds their drift and dream.  
It just sat in against the land,  
dirty windows and a hard geometry of bricks.  
It had a cinder playground where once I skinned

my knee to the bone. The nuns told me to offer up  
the pain for the poor souls in purgatory.  
I bled the whole way home where my mother called me  
sweetheart and precious all day long.  
Angels sat next to me on the couch where I lay  
and thought about the sisters, their bony  
white fingers, their yellow teeth and their  
rock-scarred sign that said NO RUNNING  
that we threw stones against for pennies,  
even during summer, but the thing just stood there,  
its concrete foot dug in deep.

### OUT OF BODY

The ladder leaning against the house  
Is missing a rung,  
So you have to take a giant step  
Half-way up. I'd fix it but I like  
The feeling of leaving the earth  
For that extra stretch. It's like  
Stepping outside my body, and I think  
I could take more steps like that  
And scale the entire distance  
Between body and spirit, extending one  
To leave the other—non-matter  
On its way up indefinitely.  
All you need is a slight wind to start with,  
One that brushes but doesn't bruise your cheek—  
And just the right degree of forgetfulness,  
The sky so full of stairs  
I could step off, and walk anywhere.