

he keeps getting in the way of insults.
He keeps wrapping
his wings around those in the cold.

Even his lamentations are unheard,
though now,
in for the long haul, trying to live

beyond despair, he believes, he needs
to believe
everything he does takes root, hums

beneath the surfaces of the world.

FORGIVENESS

The torturer removes a fingernail:

No forgiveness for him.

An old Nazi softens, laments:

No, put him to death.

He who hates:

Give him a mirror and a gun.

He who hates in the singular:

Forgive him, once.

The crimes of lovers:

Forgive them later, as soon as you can.

Anyone who hurts someone you love:

Saints, you forgivers,

we could never be friends.

The betrayer, the liar, the thief:

Forgive anything you might do yourself.

The terrorist pulls a pin:

Forgive the desperate, the homeless,
the crazed.

The terrorist pulls a pin:

No, no more good reasons.

The rat in my crawlspace, the vicious rat:
No forgiveness necessary.
I, who put out the poison:
God of rats, forgive me once again.

EACH FROM DIFFERENT HEIGHTS

That time I thought I was in love
and calmly said so
was not much different from the time
I was truly in love
and slept poorly and spoke out loud
to the wall
and discovered the hidden genius
of my hands.
And the times I felt less in love,
less than someone,
were, to be honest, not so different
either.
Each was ridiculous in its own way
and each was tender, yes,
sometimes even the false is tender.
I am astounded
by the various kisses we're capable of.
Each from different heights
diminished, which is simply the law.
And the big bruise
from the longer fall looked perfectly white
in a few years.
That astounded me most of all.