

Three Poems · *Jane Kenyon*

ICE OUT

As late as yesterday ice preoccupied
the pond—dark, half melted, water-logged.
Then it sank in the night, one piece,
taking winter with it. And afterward
everything seems simple and good.

All afternoon I lifted oak leaves
from the flowerbeds, and greeted
like friends the green-white crowns
of perennials. They have the tender,
unnerving beauty of a baby's head.

How I hated to come in! I've left
the windows open to hear the peepers'
wildly disproportionate cries.
Dinner is over, no one stirs. The dog
sighs, sneezes, and closes his eyes.

CULTURAL EXCHANGE

A postcard arrives from a friend
visiting the Great Wall of China.
"Life couldn't be better," says M.

I was there once, in March. Unkind wind
bore down from the north. Mongolia . . .
How steep it is! In places even presidents
are forced to drop down on all fours.