

stretches forever. The heron
erects a long body,
standing to see, and
the blue whale tests
the ocean and finds no
limit to its buoyancy.

In this true world the jay
blurs itself in flight;
the wind blots the sharpness
of the pine. The artist,
pausing at the wall, finds
his shapes already leaning,
the long wolves stretched
by the tension of the chase,
the great square ox expanding,
fleeing on its spindly
legs, acquiring by its
speed the body of fright.

Landscape with a Woman / Richard Shelton

when shadows climb
out of the desert
up the sides of mountains
and violent birds pass like projectiles
on their way home for the night
I say I have given you
everything it was all I had

when darkness rises
to the tops of saguaros
and a river of cool air begins to flow
down the arroyo
I say I have given you
little it was all I had

when the moon
sits on top of the Santa Ritas
then levitates becoming smaller
and more pale as it goes
I say I have given you
nothing it was all I had

but you do not listen you go on
into your losses without birds
without mountains or shadows
or the moon you look into yourself
and say it is not enough
it was never enough

New House / Diane Ackerman

We bought a house hand-me-down
and complete, packed with all the gear
family life engenders: cameras,
clothing, junk and antiques,
vibrator, bowling ball, pans and glasses.

Every knick-knack knows gossip
I have no right to, about a Mr. Norton
who lived, bred, and boozed there.
I'm told he died of gluttony
in middle age, towards the end

bloating like a pufferfish.
Now suddenly I've acquired
someone's life, as if it were a fondue-pot
or a hedge-cutter. His initial
still rules the hall linoleum.

There are mortgages and taxes
and a pool to skim daily,
poison-ivy to uproot, grass to mow,
doors to lock. And me
with no steady job guaranteed.