

WATER MUSIC

Gnats orbit my face as we float
on our backs in the brown river,
eyes closed or half-closed to the sun
and building thunderheads.
We are trying to recover our luck
by surrendering our bodies
to the current. A current runs
through everything, yes, but here
it is explicit—we are far
from the clean black beetles that do
authority's bidding, far from
the toxicity of bank loans.
All we have is this chaos in our hearts.
And water trickling over the mossy
lip of the dam down there as surely
as money, or love, making an inhuman
music on the jumbled rocks below.
A big turquoise dragonfly lights
on a floating twig, freezes: it
flexes its four wings so slowly
I fall further into the world
of dreaming. I think this may be
one of those rare moments of transcendence.
Don't you believe it. The dragonfly,
though beautiful, is as inhuman
as a jewel; its carapace is hard,
its eyes compound—it must see in clicks
and segments what we see
as smooth and round; a live mineral,
it needs this water to perpetuate
its ancient genes, which we do
on dry land, calling it by other names.
In *love*, we say, somehow

wrapping our brittle bones around
each other, swimming toward that music
neither of us understands. Music
like the jeweled clockwork
of the sun-drenched dragonfly's
four perfect wings that flex the light.
There is no secret in that light,
no matter how beautiful, how full.

DOG YEARS

Well, in a hundred years when
an army of blind crows scratches
with scarred claws in the duff
at the edge of the browning woods
by the river; when new grasses
tough as knotted rope have grown
that have never heard
the historical whisper of languages
and the religions spawned thereby;
when old trout burn
huge and muscular near the bottom
of the drunken river from which lush
weeds coil;
 when no hammer blows
fall like cold syllables in the heart
of the village to ring the spring air
and prick up the ears of old dogs
sweltering on our porches;
when our dogs twitch their fine noses
at the acrid combinations
of leaf smoke and the cold burnings
of fungus;
 when it is all over
for us, even in this rural paradise