

Black Tea

That wedding song keeps thrumming in my head like Da Vinci's
star of Bethlehem, and other sketches for plants
must have, a hundred notes on where the forest meets the field,
how the stone thirsts as if it were another being,

and your eyes that change mine in the twilight and the dawn
we confused it for. It's a secret love, and I love
standing in this field, a happy person in a field like a sweet legume
on a tongue, a kiss spiced in rain.

You could be the future because I don't know any better. Ten years
ago I was 21 and thought my body was something labial
or palatal and someone would say *silver-foil* and make me over.
You're young and can sleep

with ginger and gardenia flowers around your neck and I have to
believe you because parting is the younger sister of death
Mandelstam said. On that reprieve to Armenia under the unobserving
stars for the last time no one knew his name

was under a stone already white with a mushroom's velvety grave. *Go*
the gold in his tooth said, *go* demand the dogwoods
for ten days. Damn the spring that turns to winter again, o permanent
green grass, that turquoise of your famous eyes I eat

like a cow a horse an ass awake all night, following an idea that pours
over me ice and Russian in origin. Your husky
voice ratchets an opening into a monastery, a hive with octagon
musculature. Could I take it in my hands, could I

memorize the whirl of desire in this field where the tides have traveled
as if by wildflower, if by chance I could keep what for you
was a given, what for you was a simple thing, how would I settle again
onto the earth, who holds me like a child so far out

on a limb that wasn't made even for a bird. Love more fragile
than subtlety breaks habit; the natural breeze
is your hair across my back and I might have something to do with it.
The night is clear and imperfect.

Some say the stars milk themselves through the boughs of the bare
trees, and some say the trees are never bare. Some even
that they whom we counted on to remain around us like mothers,
that they aren't there. It's a good night

because you were free with me, because you let me cry on your gold chains
that led to my village. The two of us up there
for a look, you know the place where the sheep are born
and the goat milk is fresh, with you it felt like fruit

going back and forth across me on a silk boat, your eyelashes
suddenly bare and a message, the song
that tensed my neck with its I'm-not-a-child-anymore teeth, steamed
into worlds of wild honey. The gods are in the leaves.

-Jane Miller