

ODE

There are no secrets
In Poetryland
A little cloud or two
The sun rhymes
Open, scans
Brazenly
The sky for a welt
This poem goes out
To the man
Who told E. she writes
“Like a man”
You might know him
You can do it
To literally anything
Rilke made love
To angels
Leopardi sought
His little hill in a dream
A red barn
A house painted
Corn or grain
Yellow
A candle above
The marriage bed
The hydrangea
Solidly middle class
Can I say
Winter is pretty
Without reference
To the cold
The illusion of depth

In landscapes
Do I appear
By chance to know
How best to wield the dahlia
We have MFAs
In wielding the dahlia
A whisper network
Like no other
Marching through
Harsh winds
A whole chunk of ice
On the state
Flower of New Jersey
DNA everywhere

BEFORE THE FLOOD

When you speak of death I hear
Birds inside me. All at once

The clouds bespeak vanity
For I have redacted the names

Of all odes, have said *Error*
Is my oracle, and though shame

Is power, power is shameless.
Before the flood, I lived

In a house by the sea, hoping
To hide my pleasure away

In water, so that one day
Monkish Eros would escape with

My beloved, his most beloved
Privilege imperiled at last.

UTOPIA

after Michael Burkard

Are you mad at me?
Don't be. I know I can be
Difficult. The perfect word
Is hard to find, syntax
Can be difficult to parse, it's true.
And although there are those who find
Difficulty a virtue, madness too,
I aim to simplify
My loss, ambition, rage and joy
Into a single word
And speak it to you, Love,
As I've been speaking all along
Of hardship and crisis, the struggle
For Utopia, a word only
Visible by grace of the dark.

NEW JERSEY

When they ask me where I'm from I say

Ithaca, the island not the city.

Renowned for its stonework, its impassable villages.

Too mountainous for any beasts but goats.