

Night Song

Blue light
of almost
day,
night softens,
time seeps,
loose
as milk.
The mind
sleepwalks,
dreams over
and over
its own
waking.
Here, sense
swims,
the brain
shuffled
but
still
I think
alive.
The baby feeds.
The baby feeds
and the new
day
breaks,
its bright
cloths
let down
to chime
across the
morning
sky.

Subject of Interruption

‘It is to moments of undoing, I argue, that we need to apply ourselves theoretically, if we are to try to glimpse something we may term ‘maternal subjectivity’... The mother emerges from these investigations not only as a subject of interruption, encumbered, viscous, impeded, but also re-sensitized to sound, smell, emotions, sentient awareness, language, love.’ – Lisa Baraitser *Maternal Encounters: The Ethics of Interruption* (2009)

The way a thought / will come / tense / and lustrous / as a bubble / only to be / burst / and
so again / it is / scraped knee / it is / oven on / it is a message / unsent / and so urgent / as
to be / impossible / the way the day / snaps / like a crocodile / breaks / like glass / all in /
little pieces / lying / on the floor / dangerous / and quite / unexceptional / there is no /
question / of no / answer here / everything / is subject to / the continuous / stopping / of
itself so / please / don't start / not now / to think / about what / it would be / not / to carry
on / because / the question is / always / and again / because / how many / cucumbers /
because / the baby / cries / because / the shoe is / lost / again / because / I do not / think /
anybody knows / how much / can be cut / up / and put back / together / again / the shoe
is / found / and the baby is / smiling / and everything / shines / again / all over / with love /
because / whatever you / think / the answer is / it is / more

List

‘Unlike physical household labor, cognitive tasks adhere to mothers and remain their responsibility net of their greater resources or employment demands. As a consequence, cognitive labor cannot be as easily outsourced or renegotiated as physical labor because it is diffuse, ongoing, and usually invisible, taking place within one’s own head.’ – Catalano Weeks et al. *Gender, Cognitive Labor and the Limits of Time and Money* (2025)

Like water

(how it won’t
bear counting)

or a tide

(how it sucks and
drags at the shore).

The way it steals
up the body

(how the chin must tip
to sip the air).

Some days it swells
to a terrible wave,

froths and churns,
surges up
then crashes down
to fling deep all it can.

Such undoing!

The lungs burn,
the eyes sting,

but you wouldn’t call it
drowning.

Tooth & Nail

Morning

our bed
a burrow

children pressed
and splayed

mess of hair
neck hip elbow
knee

scratch
of toe

their hot
breath

so close
as to be

a shout

this crush
and sprawl

of selves

no telling

where
a person begins

or ends

here

only
how much

we are like

animals

huddled
scenting

that sniff
of scalp

just right
again again

not to repeat
myself

but the things
I'd do for it

The Rooms

With what care
she moves between
the rooms of her life.

Some doors open
to a forest,
a chasm,
a sea.

There is the room
where she works.

There is the room
where she sleeps
(its door ajar).

There are the rooms
in which her children
grow and play,

where colour swoops –
purple chasing blue, green, gold.

See how deftly
she attends each door,

how she slips
the latch home
without sound.

So often she must keep
each room of her life
to itself.

But what a thing it is –
what rare summons –
when she may throw open
every door at once;

the light set free
to rush between –
to pour itself –
wild, sweet, splendid –
over everything.