

## UNINVITED GUEST

If memory is related to mourning then what does this morning glory recall once the large spider retreats to another bloom? The memory of its sprawled legs like mosquito bites on the perimeter of white petals. A mourning constellation. Scratch    scratch    scratch like nostalgia. Oh, now I see how it goes.

## LAST WISH

To return as Russian thistle. To bloom with both flowers & spines. To be mistress of salt, soon to be mascot of wind with no map to obey. To break with her roots, once & for all—a tumbleweed now free to head out alone into Socorro, litter its streets and sidewalks with seed. To wander with barefoot kids on bikes, women hanging laundry, men picking cotton under supervision of the sun, hens roaming in search of a place to roost. To be, even in death, haunting the earth, everywhere as home.

## LITTLE GOD, OR RETROSPECTIVE ON MOTHERHOOD

before I knew / what a body could do / I submerged a roll of life / -savers into my mom's  
10-gallon / fish tank, watched it settle / into fake blue gravel, waited / for the rainbow I  
thought I could make / in the water, went to bed, forgot / about it all, woke up, walked about  
/ with my dollhouse imagination & found / my mom crying against the glass. *look— / all my  
fish—suctioned / to the sides of the tank.* I couldn't / look at what I'd done & would never /  
confess to. what girl could / know that creation & neglect / could be this innocent?

## PLURALS

Typing quotations about translating tangos, I realize I want to spell *tangos* as *tangoes*, & I think about *mangoes* & wonder if I've been spelling this word all wrong for a good part of my life, but then I look up *mangoes* & see this is the correct spelling, but the relief is fleeting & then I'm back to worrying about tangos & that missing *e*—did *mangoes* borrow it from *tangoes* because it needed a letter for what the tongue does when it curls a juicy chunk of mango into the depths of its mouth & sends it descending down the throat, or did tangos abandon the *e* the way one does a dance partner at a certain point in one's life—& maybe these two things occurred at the same time—aha, a twist of fate, because once one devours a slice of mango one wants to tango around the room reveling in that moment of bliss meant for only one. & one ends with an *e*. I see it now. & that's why *mangoes* is spelled *mangoes* and *tangos* is just *tangos*. There is no grammar rule for this. & don't ask me why I was typing quotations about translating tangos.

## GETTING OUT OF DODGE

I bought a dog  
& named him  
god just so I could  
believe in something  
again. These are words  
you won't see on a sign  
advertising your neighborhood  
church for everyone  
would be out  
front asking, *But who  
will help us  
reckon with our lone  
-liness?* Just like the last  
drive-in diner  
in the city that's been  
struggling for years  
vehicles line up  
from miles around only when  
they hear it's closing  
at the end of the month.

## BIRD-WATCHING AS A FORM OF FAITH

As soon as you think  
you see some  
-thing, it's gone. I think  
I hear the same bird  
from yesterday, feel  
for the binoculars, tell  
myself I should memorize  
its call, but I don't  
want even this joy to be  
predictable, dependable

## I ONCE HEARD

a man talk / about true silence / being found inside / a Hawaiian volcano / where the  
decibels / slide into negative / loss becomes less / than nothing when / solving this equation  
// a friend says / he does not / believe in closure / for definitions vary / depending upon  
one's / reception & perception // the man said / silence is not / absence of sound / but  
absence of / noise & this / is what losing / you is like / silence as sound / as in having /  
something that is / nothing can be / measured as if / having nothing is / at least having /  
something wake me / every night & / morning—this quiet / that is not / quieting—a silence  
/ you could not / know you protect

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