

Sophie

Pionus, blue-headed, but I rarely thought breed,
bird, precisely parrot, good enough for my feathered brain,
never figuring I'd live with one, let alone a husband,
so much more encyclopedic in regards to species.
Still, his conviction won over, as is often the case,
while nearly newly born, frail as a daffodil,
you lay snug on that towel, in the lap, thigh-nestled,
or brought close to the chest, ebony eyes bright
in a cloud of soft fluff periwinkle peeping.

Buddha-like is how you grew & stayed,
our contemplative one on the shoulders,
hugging the neck nook, unflappable for the most part,
with your scent of an older Victorian woman's powder,
while stretching for a good noggin-rub
& perhaps it was that, come to think,
which brought the origins of your name.

For more than a decade we had this on-loan
slice of sky, christening our home, gold-nimbus-true,
calming as a palm soothing away fever
or patting a chest asthmatic as panic
'til breaths and heartbeats caught up with themselves.

For more than a decade, with an expectation of longer,
as the Ornithologists' decreed, but for some rare liver ailment
& it's not fashionable to weep, not modern to grieve
when the maturity of technology did all that it could
under the veterinarian's kind guidance,
auspiciously abiding, and that last needle gave relief,
peaceful, sleep-easy, a nodding off into release.

How surprising to sob like such a baby
as if something gave way deep inside,
wet salt dampening your blue downy crown,
but no one tells you every death will change you,
crack open the first, if you mess up just once
& live from your heart
instead of your head.

Afterwards came the month of lost gloves,
single strays everywhere & did they remember
their pairing, when left on a door knob or stair rail
should the one who lost happen by?

That is how routine stays, day to night,
when we each have our orphan feelings
& there is the presence of one remembered
just on the rim, almost glimpsed, felt
but still out of reach.

A month later, Sophie,
each minute, as the Buddhists teach, an opportunity
to be present & Spring is nearly here, the bark of each birch
showing its eyes, as we go on in mortality,
walking our street, noting too robins on lawns again,
robins, crocuses, my husband and I.