

This Is Not a Mine

Is it thunder, that rumble,
or more heaving like before?
How many days it has been
since the ceilings slid,
sealing this basement?
We were fortunate in a way.
At least here there are tins,
pickled preserves,
& my smart sister with her candles,
with her jack knife, who knew...

When the tremors started
she said it felt like a premonition
and hurried us, all of us, even the cat,
scratching while being pulled along.
Later, we waited,
in fact are still waiting now,
singing songs, telling stories
to ward off the silences,
those claustrophobic coats.

How much air, time is left?
Did our parents survive?
What's it like up above?

Listen.
Again there's that shaking, dust
from the rafters, the baby crying and,
"Move to the wall!" My sister orders.
"Or the archway. It's strongest."

How can she do it?
My god, something's clawing,
cracking in---
voices,
a flashlight.
I thought I was too numb
even for these.