

Feral Cats

All night, a howl
outside the window. All night an animal
is sick. I won't get any of this right
the first time.

In Switzerland,
scientists have found the region of the brain that tricks us
into seeing ghosts. Some cloud of current
that drifts from front
of skull to back. They can fake
an out-of-body experience
by shocking the corpus callosum. A door

slams shut. Now there's death
in every shadow. It's a seven-ten split. There is no wall
to shoulder up against this new logic.

Before, I thought
if it was raining here, it was raining two blocks away. The animals

are still dying. I can hear them all night. We had hoped
for the burning ghost ship of legend to light
our harbor, in front of news cameras, in front of hundreds
of witnesses. We would cheer
it home to dock. Relief. An uneasy audience
ready to laugh. The first time. A stone

is tied to a hungry animal's neck. It is dropped
into a mile-deep oceanic crevice off the Aleutian Islands.
Irreversible. It takes thirty minutes
for the animal to even hit the bottom.

Killing Machine

In the summer here it feels as though we haven't felt
the wind in ages. There is a hum
on the air. Everybody is caterwaul

and jostled nerves. All picked and thrown. City officials
have decided on rolling blackouts. There isn't enough time to read
today's newspaper. There'll be another one tomorrow.

More and more people ask me what
exactly I am. My flexible pallor.

I tell them I want somebody to love. I need somebody to love.

But that's not enough.

My friend needs help
but I don't want to help. I want to stay home
and watch a DVD alone. Preferably a comedy

without political undertones. I am aimless. I need

a specific calendar filled with appointments. I can't even
put my groceries away in order. I never eat
them. They expire. They were right all along, to bring us all into

this fresh mayhem, to take down our buildings. Shaheen
means "eagle" in Arabic. I wouldn't vote if I could

and this is not irresponsible. I was born in a foreign city rebuilt from its own rubble. I know and love that the thing we all have in common is that we are part of a great and unstoppable killing machine. We are sure we have been the best we could have ever been.

Dementia Unit

One moment. I remember a ditch. A ditch
where the young mother's body was
dumped. There were crosses and bluebonnets. There is

an apartment overlooking a rainy city and the news
discusses the implication of sunshine. I shake just
thinking of the airline. A company is almost

a living thing. I've forgotten who I am a few times.
From surgery, from drugs. The police are searching
all the cars on the north side of the block today,

and the south side of the block tomorrow. They say
it's very important, but I don't think there's anything
I want them to find, personally. Personally, I'd take

the door with the tiger, but that would be an accident.
It's my luck. There's a tiger behind every door. A plane
crash beneath every plane. A carjacking on every corner.

Dread sprouting from every word. From Aryan to Zion.
From Assisted Suicide to Zen Meditation. Ha! You thought
I was beyond that. Above that. A stray bullet hits

the woman in front of us at the bank. In front of both
of us. When I tell the story I say she was in front of me,
when you tell the story you say she was in front of you.

The truth is she was just in front of the bullet. What
will it take for us to learn the value of our pitiful lives?
I mean all of them, put together, a wisp in the corner

of a dark room, a missed word in the middle
of an epic bildungsroman about sorcery and betrayal
in the most carnal sense. One gasp in a silent crowd.

New Model Honeybee

There's nothing you can do to stop it. A wind moves
over your ear, muffling
the music you thought you could hear from a car
parked outside, invisible, behind the next house. Microchip stocks

have risen dramatically in the past few weeks. Honey
is down. Honey is always down. The best men
are working on a solution. You can't
do anything except watch
the TV special on the dogface boy.
The historical dogface boy. See how they all said
he was really a genius under
all that fur? I mean, I don't want

to tell you what to do. But your worry is beginning
to seep. It's flooding the local streets. The interstates
are down to one lane. It's not
just your worry. It's becoming a pandemic. New laws

have dimmed home light bulbs. New laws forbid
the sale of baklava under all
but the most dire circumstances. New laws require the donation
of Saran Wrap to local scientific research stations.

When are you going to move closer on the couch? We don't
have all night. You told me to wash
my bedclothes and I did. You told me

to get my affairs in order. What was the first sign? What

is this humming that washes my head like a wave?

O Europe! O ton of honey! A wind

moves through your emptied ribs. The ship's fire

is put out by the water rushing into the hold.