

Be Mine

Little body, I am taken with your
puff and huff and groan. Little knees
that work so hard, jackknife elbow and jangling
groin, little coin slot, little piggy bank. Little
hair on arm and neck and cheek, thank you
for standing up and being seen. Thank you
puffy flesh, the belly of it, the bloody sack
of it. Dear body, I am in love, smitten
by your ten toes and matching toenails,
your foot arch and knobby ankle, knuckle
bone, collar bone, funny bone sending me
in stitches, air rushing through the front
door and breaking out the back. Oh body,
all that I have is yours, my bobby pins and bank
account, my stocked larder and heavy
grieving, little boredoms and peals
of laughter, oh all this is yours to put
to fat and butter, all that has made me,
dog that I am, I follow you everywhere
panting with desire.

Just This

Finally the sap
begins to flow and peepers eager
in tree-cities start up a thousand tiny
rhythmic saws, a thousand quarter-teaspoons
of delirium spooned out drop by drop
in hemidemisemiquavers of frog
belly, frog sperm, frog spawn, frog
joy and jelly, messaged across woodlands
to waiting lovers: *Here here here*
I am the tiny green throats declare, not in
flowers still fisted tight in soil, not in oil-
warmed airless walls but here
with full-cheeked slapping thighs
loosed into the waiting darkness, voicing urges
untongued all winter long *this,*
just this.

The Boulders of Lyell Canyon

I name them Upright, Lengthwise, Split
Down the Middle: these granites strewn
like milky stars. You could orient by them, find
your way through creek, meadow, and wood.
This one is here, and that one is there, its neighbor
next to both, old friends grinding down shards
of philosophy. It could take a million years
to see the argument to conclusion, points
split finer and finer, rubbed to a sheen
into pebbles, then to sand in an hourglass.
They record the course of floods, huddle
together beneath parent slopes where they
were wrenched and scraped by glaciers, shaped
and molded by teachers of ice, which explains
their patience and hardness, having been milled
so interminably slowly to an exacting rule.
Now they languish, sun seeping into feldspars
and micas, into the quartzes until they quiver
with pure excitement—in heat and cold, wind
and stillness, through minutes and millennia,
and still radiate impassiveness.

(originally published in *Scientific American*, May 2020)

Cascade

Like tangled hair over stone, roots
hold trees against a stream. The current loosens
its gorgeous fall, braids and unbraids
against the rock while roots draw water
to the crown, a fountain and a glory.
The falls pull water downward
from their spring, the spring
rises and overflows; leaves
push outwards; the weeping willow
greens. Cascades swell with rain and spill
their shimmering ringlets down, fall
and fall all summer long until trees
let down their hair and leaves
are loosed, lips call sap
back to the earth and all
stands dark and silent.
Frost grows, the current
swirls and slows under lacey ice
but does not stop. A tree's heart
does not freeze in its quiet
sleep. So close and so
far under. I lay
my hand on root
and rock. I dip
my hand in water
and the sap
wells up.

(originally published on the *SWS Social Sciences and Art & Humanities Blog*, February 10, 2021: <https://sgemworld.at/index.php/blog-lovers/blogsha/the-poetry-of-janet-macfadyen-where-science-meets-art>)