

## *The Effects*

The river's pulled itself away from us.  
We count our losses—a dead fox, a shoe.  
The sky yields to what we make of it:  
mackerel, cirrus, heaven, blue.

It's hard to see if what we do matters  
since whatever part we might've played  
in any drowning, the hurt of some child,  
has gone the way of all things made

or caused, has become something done, for good  
(the fox embalmed in mud, the shoe intact).  
But then; if we weren't here to see these things  
death would have no say—not that that

cormorant careering towards the river, its feet  
splayed to brake, an intense will in its wings,  
cares. It settles a moment, plunges—is gone.  
We're here at the edge to count, and count the rings.

## *The Move*

It's hard to believe you'll leave this house  
that grief has built but time stands by  
for when you'll push up from that table  
and move towards the door and find

that you don't freeze or buckle or stall;  
that you're not slow-breasting through air  
that holds in folds every image  
you have of him released at once;

that the move isn't a heave through now  
but unlocks itself without thought,  
set off perhaps by a wand of light  
shooting in from the door shooting

straight across the floor and up  
the wall along the speckled counter  
coming to naught in a fuzzy burst  
on the kettle's still warm cheek;

that it is what it is—a step  
back to old comforts and towards  
the awkward begetting of new ones  
as when you said with some rapture

*Being dead is so much more  
alive than dying* and I thought of the dead  
whose faces settle into the grounds  
of a place they've reached inside them.

And the move will herald an armistice  
between soul—that highly-strung old thing—  
and body who gets its laissez-faire  
way at last as you wipe your hands

on a tea-towel (twenty kinds of leaf)  
and stand at the door to look through  
at the trees, noncommittal, bare,  
who are alone, and salute you.