I wouldn’t pretend I couldn’t see
my nakedness in Eden. I wouldn’t lie
placid as a hooked and fatty fish
under Adam. That was my first
argument with God. The second,
that he turned my sister into bone
for his own and Adam’s sake
honied away everything she’d been
when we lay together among stars.

Some nights I wait at the edge of the garden—
how lush it is, how full of anguish.
I can hear the blossoms breaking,
roots of rushes wringing out the earth.
Light and docile, she walks
to the hawthorn hedge, always
a trail of creatures at her side,
lynx, coyote, prong-horned antelope.
Does she know I’m here?

If she looked in the eyes of the cat
she would see me. My footsteps
barely traceable, my voice thin
whisp across her cheek. She’s forgotten
my name, forgotten our one smell
as we wound around each other,
her fingers in my mouth, my hand holding
her heartbeat, little wounded wren
I could not save from grief.

The Fall of Eve

When the animals used to talk to me--
lisp of snail, click of grasshopper’s
exact consonants, dolphin’s diphthong
slipping through the waves--there were rumours
a woman, perhaps with wings, roamed
the wasteland. They said she was furred,
sleek and shimmering as weasel,
eyes wells of deepest water
where you’d surely drown.

Something stirred in me, a ripple
when a stone is dropped. Not knowing what she feared, I washed the smell of man from my skin, walked to where the garden stopped and everything Adam couldn’t name fell into poetry and silence.

It was a place you sensed you were watched, caught in a gaze that made you strange.

The serpent was the last I understood, his voice stayed after otter’s, after hawk’s, wolf’s and rat’s. I could feel his belly’s rasp across my own, my thighs prickling. When he offered me the apple I bit because I wanted what he’d polished with his tongue.

At the hawthorn hedge, good and evil sweet in my mouth, I said Lilith though I didn’t remember what it meant, then I said beloved and something like a breath lifted the hair on the back of my neck.

Though I couldn’t see through shadows I grasped she is what I’ve lost. God’s voice roared through the leaves and I glimpsed wings unfolding, blue feathers bewildering the other blue of the sky.

My own arms rose and I know the way you know your own sorrow on this earth, once I was that dear, that close to her, once I too could fly.