To a Woman Chemist

You study separation.
You can measure the distance between atoms.
There is so much space between each of them
we should be able to slide together,
walk through closed doors.
I'd like to enter a tree.
I imagine a ship battering itself on a shore.

Once I met a psychologist named Jim.
He said, “The world is a castle of mirrors.
Wherever you look you see yourself.”
He taught me not to say, “I like you,”
but “The Lauren in me
likes the Jim in me.”
He made me lonely for three weeks,
then the him that was in me
went back to Philadelphia.

This is the jargon of the self.
It’s been helpful.
Now I think I know why
in the dark beer bar of us
on the Wednesday night of us,
I could not always understand you.
Your thought had to pass
through all the stubborn atoms like a sperm,
through the mirrored spheres of two selves.
I guess if I could not hear you, it was because I
could not hear you.

Now I am walking on a path by the capitol.
A yellow bow bobs like a spider
tied on a shin-high wire that divides new grass
from whatever is not new grass.
In the West, two hot air balloons of me are rising.
Whoever this day is part of, it is warm.
I perceive the I of me is not always lonely.

For example,
When the you of me is not in the lab,

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