

The Clearest Night Sky

CARLA MCGILL

*The ending was glass breaking
stones falling from cliffs
The ending was a cat's purr
the vanishing foam of waves
on all the shores he loved*

Pebbled fields beside the tracks,
his hands hitting a jar
a sparkling beer in the sun
and some part of me, like Athena
already formed, understood
the dark veins, afflictions
of generations, our troubles.

Look at that big old crow,
my grandmother said,
as she strung bleached bones
on the laundry line.
It was October,
a fierce wind full of nettles.
Bare sky over mountains.

*The beginning was thunder
flash flood*

*The beginning was light
amber of dawn shimmering
on his infant grimace*

Shortcake still served
beside steak, the sad opening
door, the fighting, later crying
those heaving child sobs
until waking for school
where I wandered like I
running from the flies.

There are too many instances,
they crowd like sirens and twigs,
like voices in a broken choir,
and at times I just see jackrabbits
under the pepper tree, at ease
in cooling afternoons, or
the cake bowl while granny slept.

*The ending was a singing bird
hot lava sinking back
The ending was a whisper
merciful ceasing of machines
a star shooting across the clearest night sky*