**The Blue Bird**

The lake lay blue below the hill.

O’er it, as I looked, there flew

Across the waters, cold and still,

A bird whose wings were palest blue.

The sky above was blue at last,

The sky beneath me blue in blue.

A moment, ere the bird had passed

It caught his image as he flew.

—Mary Coleridge

**The Bluet**

And is it stamina

that unseasonably freaks

forth a bluet, a

Quaker lady, by

the lake? So small,

a drop of sky that

splashed and held,

four-petaled, creamy

in its throat. The woods

around were brown,

the air crisp as a

Carr's table water

biscuit and smelt of

cider. There were frost

apples on the trees in

the field below the house.

The pond was still, then

broke into a ripple.

The hills, the leaves that

have not yet fallen

are deep and oriental

rug colors. Brown leaves

in the woods set off

gray trunks of trees.

But that bluet was

the focus of it all: last

spring, next spring, what

does it matter? Unexpected

as a tear when someone

reads a poem you wrote

for him: “It’s this line

here.” That bluet breaks

me up, tiny spring flower

late, late in dour October.

—James Schuyler

**Blue**

As through marble or the lining of

certain fish split open and scooped

clean, this is the blue vein

that rides, where the flesh is even

whiter than the rest of her, the splayed

thighs mother forgets, busy struggling

for command over bones: her own,

those of the chaise longue, all

equally uncooperative, and there’s

the wind, too. This is her hair, gone

from white to blue in the air.

This is the black, shot with blue, of my dark

daddy’s knuckles, that do not change, ever.

Which is to say they are no more pale

in anger than at rest, or when, as

I imagine them now, they follow

the same two fingers he has always used

to make the rim of every empty blue

glass in the house sing.

Always, the same

blue-to-black sorrow

no black surface can entirely hide.

Under the night, somewhere

between the white that is nothing so much as

blue, and the black that is, finally; nothing,

I am the man neither of you remembers.

Shielding, in the half-dark,

the blue eyes I sometimes forget

I don’t have. Pulling my own stoop-

shouldered kind of blues across paper.

Apparently misinformed about the rumored

stuff of dreams: everywhere I inquired,

I was told look for blue.

—Carl Phillips

**Blue That Believes in Nothing**

When the gold light rinsed out of the trees,

Heaping the ground with its residue of sun,

He tried to imagine syllables it wished to say.

Black wood of winter stood against the sky,

A brittle confusion, gaggle of branches,

The snarl at the tip of things,

As he struggled to believe a sere sentence,

In the clatter and click of dry objects,

The patient whispering in the soil.

An obliterating whiteness casually came down,

And he hoped its soft insinuation, flake on flake,

Might speak for him in the shibboleth of this world.

But the place he heard never sounded like his own,

Its tongue a dialect he never learned,

Its idiom an alien understanding;

Again and again

The blue that believes in nothing

Pronounced those strange and barbarous words:

Freedom, it said, release, decay.

Leaf and tree and stone.

Earth. Water. Air.

—George Bradley

**The Blue Terrance**

If you subtract the minor losses,

you can return to your childhood too:

the blackboard chalked with crosses,

the math teacher’s toe ring. You

can be the black boy not even the buck-

toothed girls took a liking to:

this match box, these bones in their funk

machine, this thumb worn smooth

as the belly of a shovel. Thump. Thump.

Thump. Everything I hold takes root.

I remember what the world was like before

I heard the tide humping the shore smooth,

and the lyrics asking: *How long has your door*

*been closed?*I remember a garter belt wrung

like a snake around a thigh in the shadows

of a wedding gown before it was flung

out into the bluest part of the night.

Suppose you were nothing but a song

in a busted speaker? Suppose you had to wipe

sweat from the brow of a righteous woman,

but all you owned was a dirty rag? That’s why

the blues will never go out of fashion:

their half rotten aroma, their bloodshot octaves of

consequence; that’s why when they call, Boy, you’re in

trouble. Especially if you love as I love

falling to the earth. Especially if you’re a little bit

high strung and a little bit gutted balloon. I love

watching the sky regret nothing but its

self, though only my lover knows it to be so,

and only after watching me sit

and stare off past Heaven. I love the word *No*

for its prudence, but I love the romantic

who submits finally to sex in a burning row-

house more. That’s why nothing’s more romantic

than working your teeth through

the muscle. Nothing’s more romantic

than the way good love can take leave of you.

That’s why I’m so doggone lonesome, Baby,

yes, I’m lonesome and I’m blue.

—Terrance Hayes