

Out Early to the Quarry, to See What They Had Done

1.

Even before dawn you can
see the white barn that's filled
with corn. Our farmer
landlord raced winter
to harvest
this field, driving his machines
even at night
with lights, up to the far
end (the quarry
end) and turning back
toward our house --

shotgun
on his lap in case
he flushed a
pheasant.

2.

Crossing the
empty
cornfield I wondered

what becomes of county fair fellows
who lie down with sticks
of dynamite, set them off, then
stand to prove
they're not dead yet.

The one I saw
loved
his work or so the Sunday
paper said.

He was one-hundred percent deaf.

3.

At the quarry I found
they'd blasted
the wall

my daughter and I had
climbed
(pretending the mountains named
after presidents)
and they had
pumped away the water where

we'd caught sun
fish big as my hand
with a homemade fly. The straight
hard wall, fallen
now like a bitter old
body. Stone
crushers and dead
fish
where the water was.

I found the two wires
(red and green, wrapped
in plastic) that made our house
shiver.

4.

New
cracks grew
in all our walls.

5.

I didn't stay at the quarry
long. Back home
I found the big kitchen table
catching
the first sun over
the barn and my children
were stirring upstairs.

The baby
sucking his thumb with a cricket's
sound.

6.

Lines
of repair

not cracks, in the walls
of the brown
milk pitcher set in the center
of our kitchen
table. The glue is white
until it dries clear and disappears
from sight. Milk will not
spill through those lines of where
our pitcher is no longer
broken.

I put sweet noisey flakes
 into the bowls and
 I climbed the stairs to carry
 my two children to their
 breakfast.

I brought them what I'd found
 at the quarry: a stone
 spiral
 broken by dynamite. (Like
 a fossil
 I thought of a shattered
 inner ear.)
 Their mother was able to heal it
 with a touch
 of the almost miraculous
 glue she'd used to fix
 our broken brown pitcher.

-- James Hazard

Oshkosh, Wisconsin

She was crying for tomorrow
 She feared age & its skin
 But her tears made her
 ugly today

Victim

turned loose
 what would I do?
 run nude in a field
 maybe sing a lot
 touch people & children
 feed animals
 bathe in a spring or creek
 exploit my freedom
 my being
 my self
 but
 I'm society's child
 &
 I'll never run free
 in the rain

-- Ruthie Wantling

Normal, Illinois