

## **The Reading Dress**

[sitting, reading text transcribed on dress]

### **Genesis**

some traveled a thousand miles on foot  
through flood, fire, and frost  
trusting doubt  
their questions rewarded  
something rare for religion  
I attempted to trace their steps  
but was eager and overwrought  
robe pulled tight, blinking hard  
still wild, senseless thoughts  
no pattern to the mind  
like lost keys in a dark alley  
obsessing over tomorrow's to do  
come, there's more light here  
plainness, desire is suffering  
stop expecting the kinds of things usually expected  
they're decoys  
disgorging stuff  
pretending to attract a change of heart  
eventually, sitting completely still  
keeping it with me day and night  
unhooked from my condition  
getting really close to the cells of my foot  
seeing between atoms  
like god  
uttering a word to create the world

### **Mindshift**

undo everything  
nothing holy!  
who are you?  
I do not know  
I don't know, I don't know  
I met him, but didn't meet him  
delightful insubstantiality  
everything comes from nothing  
emptiness  
true or untrue  
seeking inward freedom  
managing my mind  
kindness

no merit  
never taken away or lost  
everyone thinks they want happiness  
they might not  
there's beauty in life's misery  
mistakes lead through doors

### **Midstride**

motionless and full of a life  
a silence in which worlds revolve  
outside the circle  
things are dark and unknown  
doubt is a form of spaciousness  
a loud sound  
something precious damaged  
I stop myself from mending it  
leaving space where something solid should stand  
slowly, learning to embrace the dark  
there are people in place  
making decisions about  
who gets saved  
and who gets to drown  
people say:  
I can't believe this happened  
yet everything about our culture  
says this will happen  
in a world where the strongest country  
is run by a pack of rats  
we must seek happiness inside disaster  
and find peace inside war

### **A Condolence Call**

the world stands still  
the mind starts spinning  
a heavy chest falls  
keeping silent  
may not mean  
nothing is being acknowledged  
though externally nothing changed  
looking past white-capped mountains  
searching for sacred bones  
we are all already at rest  
marking time  
I whisper to the earth every sorrow and shame  
strike the coffin with my hand

refusing to say alive or dead

### **The Red Thread**

it's common to feel lonely  
to think of yourself  
as something isolated  
and small  
in the vastness of things  
a friend is home territory  
a living diary  
for sharing and storing  
the feelings of the day  
rare friendships change your understanding  
of who you are  
they help you recognize  
human achievements are rarely solitary  
even when they seem to be  
so, without premeditation  
connect  
to be of use in this world  
allow others to act on you  
refuse to be unchanged  
it takes courage to find out  
what and who you really want in this life  
an adventure that has something dark  
and unconscious about it  
desire, friendship, and death  
are all intimately entwined

### **Count the Stars in the Sky**

the vestibules of the mundane:  
airport lounges  
waiting in line  
waiting on someone else  
to do something  
there's nothing wrong  
with these passages  
you move through them  
to get to other times  
arriving in California  
being granted a visa  
waiting for that special someone  
to fall in love with you  
life is made up of  
mostly ordinary circumstances

if you awaken in the morning  
an evening death is fine

### **Out of Nowhere**

time organizes itself  
usually people work hard  
to make things happen  
yet it might be  
that things happen by themselves  
if children have natural clarity  
then we might too  
let's forget our carefully assembled fictions  
of who we are  
out of nowhere  
the mind comes forth

### **What is This?**

there are certain coercive attitudes  
weddings are happy  
funerals sad  
what if things don't have to be  
anything other than what they are?  
I know my story comes with conflicts  
beliefs have consequences  
building their own fictional world  
what if I could see things  
without wanting them to be different?  
appreciating the scars  
looking forward to seeing  
my own pore-oozing face  
the sun stands still  
and I'm no longer  
armored against unpleasant events

### **The Tree in the Garden**

broken leg on an elaborate chair  
broomstick bound for stabilization  
still shaky  
splinters sticking out  
I prefer it that way  
the woman who raised me  
a great teacher  
her stories, words working after The End  
she left so much with me  
no usual inheritance

no armchairs or tiles tied to land  
there's something strange about meeting ancestors  
vial of ancient life  
reaching down across years and night  
but what I remember?  
grandma locked in her bedroom  
salted beer in grandpa's fat fist  
mom and dad attending to the yard  
and the tree and I?  
we're acts of the universe's wild imagination

### **The Consummation**

reach in the dark  
for what you need  
all through the body  
are hands and eyes  
throw everything overboard  
beneath understanding and consciousness  
at the bottom of the bottom  
love is left  
the workings of the universe go on constantly  
snow melts, bark peels from trees  
large lumps of asteroids sail by  
like hands finding hands

[stands, removes dress, hangs it, and leaves]