In California

Joanna Newsom

My heart became a drunken runt
on the day I sunk in this shunt,
to tap me clean
of all the wonder
and the sorrow I have seen,
since I left my home:My home, on the old Milk Lake,
where the darkness does fall so fast,
it feels like some kind of mistake
(just like they told you it would;
just like the Tulgeywood).When I came into my land,
I did not understand:
neither dry rot, nor the burn pile,
nor the bark-beetle, nor the dry well,
nor the black bear.But there is another,
who is a little older.
When I broke my bone,
he carried me up from the riverside.To spend my life
in spitting-distance
of the love that I have known,
I must stay here, in an endless eventide.And if you come and see me,
you will upset the order.
You cannot come and see me,
for I set myself apart.
But when you come and see me,
in California,
you cross the border of my heart.Well, I have sown untidy furrows
across my soul,
but I am still a coward,
content to see my garden grow
so sweet & full
of someone else's flowers.But sometimes
I can almost feel the power.
Sometimes I am so in love with you
(like a little clock
that trembles on the edge of the hour,
only ever calling out "Cuckoo, cuckoo").When I called you,
you, little one,
in a bad way,
did you love me?

Do you spite me?
Time will tell if I can be well,
and rise to meet you rightly.
While, moving across my land,
brandishing themselves
like a burning branch,
advance the tallow-colored,
walleyed deer,
quiet as gondoliers,
while I wait all night, for you,
in California,
watching the fox pick off my goldfish
from their sorry, golden state--
and I am no longer
afraid of anything, save
the life that, here, awaits.I don't belong to anyone.
My heart is heavy as an oil drum.
And I don't want to be alone.
My heart is yellow as an ear of corn,
and I have torn my soul apart, from
pulling artlessly with fool commands.Some nights
I just never go to sleep at all,
and I stand,
shaking in my doorway like a sentinel,
all alone,
bracing like the bow upon a ship,
and fully abandoning
any thought of anywhere
but home,
my home.
Sometimes I can almost feel the power.
And I do love you.
Is it only timing,
that has made it such a dark hour,
only ever chiming out,
"Cuckoo, cuckoo"?My heart, I wear you down, I know.
Gotta think straight,
keep a clean plate;
keep from wearing down.
If I lose my head,
just where am I going to lay it?(For it has half-ruined me,
to be hanging around,
here, among the daphne,
blooming out of the big brown;
I am native to it, but I'm overgrown.

I have choked my roots
on the earth, as rich as roe,
here,
down in California.)

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