

## COME OUT OF THE HOUSE

*They will say you are on the wrong road  
if it is your own.*

~ Antonio Porchia

Before the house burns down,  
open your eyes to the rain and the owl.  
In the plaza a soldier is smoking—  
the elm puts on new leaves.

*My daddy doesn't want me to be  
any artist, not even a rancher  
like him. His sweat goes to deadbeats,  
like the cattle and the songs.*

I still have that part of me fire  
transformed. Is it wrong  
for a man to cry  
at three in the afternoon?

*Poet, don't you know  
fire makes you young,  
gives you something real  
to fear?*

In my pocket, I carry the jawbone of an ass.  
I learn virtue  
planting myself among the delphinium.

*Poet, feel the flames at your fleet—  
feel this ground, like water in the earth.*

Spring is demolishing the dead.  
Wrapping myself in the sun's ribbons,  
I am learning to be young, delirious  
among the ruins at three in the afternoon.

*Why do you keep fighting, poet  
—sharing pain and joy in difficult times—  
is it the ashes collecting on your teeth?*

Why are so few born  
at three in the afternoon? Why do I die?  
Are words bitter seed or fierce anemone,  
weapons or prayers?

*Poet, what is your favorite color of kite?  
Why are words never what they seem,  
falling eyes, rising mouths, charging bulls or smoke?*

Will you remain on the earth  
or flee like a lost river, an archaeologist chasing  
the stars?