

Metamorphoses

Each morning begins
with confession—
That once I split open

the locked-lipped petals

of a bearded iris to examine
its spathe & haft.
That once I floated

underwater, pretending

to have drowned,
& when no one noticed,
I swam a suit-less revenge.

Oh, the trouble is water,

a large koi roughing
the silt, recording the law
where it won't be remembered.

Oh, the trouble is the staircase built

into the hill
where it has seized & rotted.
On my knees I spend the day

forgiving the ground's give & rake,

its sharp intakes
of erosion. A hummingbird
—in one broad arc of motion—

sucks a bee down its needle,

stinger & wings & all,
without the hesitation
that comes with thought. Therefore,

in spring's black-soiled beauty, my head

like Orpheus's
is sad & hollow enough
to float toward sea

by way of swift Hebrus.