

YELLOW DOORS



poems

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Y E L L O W D O O R S

To what country shall I come
through the yellow doors, across lawns
& lanes & into woods, stooping
under sycamores & oaks, breaking
twigs, carrying an earnest burden?
What years will open out
for doggedness, the seeping of colors,
words warm in my mouth,
rescues, aching limbs, sleep, a release
of love? I can be no other
than myself, solemn & overflowing.
The doors flicker, distant pinpricks
of light, remote as Argentina; yet I
may turn tomorrow & be blinded.
My walking is waiting, a silent knitting
& unraveling of wonder, my fierceness
prowling in abeyance. Dear God, I travel
& travel toward yellow doors.

A P P R O A C H

Like tectonic plates
our thoughts drift, prepare
for the buckle & *snap!* of contact,
ponderous groans as our edges
fold, give way, slide
under or over the other
metamorphically.

You, my dear one,
encompass multitudes, terrible
as an army with banners.
Notions deployed & ready
for impact, you sail toward me
like a great ship carrying mountains,
lighted & teeming.

As I wait
I am already changed.

SHOWY SUNFLOWER

(Helianthus rigidus)

Wait here quietly
as stalks climb
before your eyes
into exuberant height, as if
sucking the moisture
& nitrogen of your whole
yard's soil. Test the ground
each morning; walk on tiptoe,
whispering. Leaves
grow long, slightly serrated,
in spiraled steps. Wait, wait
through insistent greenness,
sudden appearance of
spiky-fisted buds; pray
proliferation, give thanks
when first yellow fringes sprout
around hearts porous & brown.

And then
it's a matter of remembering

to breathe as petals open
like fingers, burst into small but emphatic
shouts, golden trumpet blasts,
banners unfurling against
bluest sky, ecstatic
speech that tosses & leans
in winds of September
like your mouth saying Oh, oh,
unable to contain its clean
& delirious song.

THEY KNOW NOT
WHAT THEY DO

for Claire

Forgive him for having no hands
to close around the tiny
fist of your being
& draw you out of darkness.

Forgive his deafness,
his mute voice that never
wound you in lullabies.

Forgive him for giving you
no name, for having none.

And your other father: forgive
the eyes that would have pierced
your skin—the I-don't-care
you learned to don
like a bulletproof vest.

Forgive the spewing words he smeared
on the door of your room
& those that tangled
in your hair. Forgive his fear.

