

It Will Take How Long

1

My father's sermons lasted twenty minutes. Finally we get to sing the last hymn. Ten-thousand-sixty minutes until the next possible funny story featuring me or my brothers. Time is like money: grown-ups control it. Worms and their bloody pulp on wet asphalt, all because adults hurry so—except when they're locked in the long tube their voices make. Think of the wait before they notice a child can pour her own milk—and the way they calibrate the shaky white flow of confidence. Time is not kind to children except when they sleep. Are we there yet? Am I me yet? It will take how long to build this mirror?

2

It takes as long to cook black beans as to drive to the shore. It takes as long to sweat as to blink. As long to weed the garden as you have. It takes as long to fall in love as to fall out. I can iron six shirts in four commercials. It takes as long for the sun to creep across the rug to my thigh as it does for me to decide not to tell one brother what the other has said. As long for the bud to open as she took dying. It takes me longer to wake than to fall asleep. Thoughts rise up and brush past cobwebs, too soft to set a rhythm. The beans are done.

3

I can part time like filmy curtains, or slap it aside—any strategy so as not to get stuck. It's taken a long necklace of years to learn this. Everything but our pagan, automatic breathing is a choice we make in time or time makes for us. Are you facing yourself or a door? I have complained away a lot of years, handed over time-flesh out of fear, and received no crystal treasure in return. An afternoon is as easy to lose as your sense of satisfaction. I take smaller bites now and love them to my heart. I try to take each new day's clock for what it is—toy, a weapon, a hunk of junk. Could be invisible. Could be dinner. To be in the place that I am. The curve of skin, the warbly-noted dark thread of the edible now.