

# connie t. braun

## THIS MORNING, A THRUSH

*the ear it strikes lightening to hear him sing*  
— Gerard Manley Hopkins

In the stillness of air, the pine holds its breath,  
between-glass-and-refraction-lake-surface, morning

is breaking. Holy, holy, holy,  
a divine harmonic chord, silver-lined. Horizon

bluing, between glass and refraction, lake surface,  
Hopkin's thrush, Whitman's *singing bird*,

*divine* harmonic chord. Silver-lined horizon  
bluing, stop note, perfect, echoes.

The thrush's song in harmonic measure,  
*worms, snakes, and loathsome grubs turned to sweet*

progression,  
to harmony, to pleasure.

Sunflowers, shells of snails, spiral  
galaxies, *spiritual songs* — *strain of earth's sweet being*,

*in the beginning*, progression, the fractal  
mystery. In the stillness of air,

the pine holds its breath. *Morning has broken*,  
holy, holy, holy, thrush's song in harmonic measure.

E M B R A C E

— after *Bewilderment*, Fanny Howe, & *Mirror Prayer*, Jorie Graham

At 4 am waxing over the blue,  
moon's full face, still water,  
I thought about how he  
reached for her, with his face  
reached down for her face,  
kissed her on the mouth as if a goodbye kiss,  
or the first.

I watched, not looking away,  
as my father kissed my mother,  
my once strong father,  
*perplexity and the loss of bearing*, the blue

of his eyes, dimming.  
The doctor thought depression,  
but I don't know if depression holds  
another's body in an embrace like that.  
His bewilderment  
at what is happening to his old body,  
the neurologist said it was Parkinsons.

I asked my father if he would come to the lake this year,  
this body, its various blues,  
the constant throughout our lives.  
He said he didn't know. I know  
change would be too much,  
cannot imagine him  
not there  
and I told him I hope he will come to the lake,  
*bewilderment's irreconcilable set of imperatives*.

Before he went to lie down for a rest,  
I said goodbye to my father. He hugged me.  
As he kissed my mother  
before he went to lie down, I did not

lower my eyes, a witness  
to the dimming light,  
love's sublimation to grief, observed.  
Dying takes time, and it takes up  
all the little time that remains,  
*the sun laying down its body,*  
and the lake thrashing, the lake still.