

## Sympathy for Eve

I wake with my right ankle in my right hand,  
my right wrist in my left hand,  
a tender, one-sided crucifixion,  
pinning myself to sheets that seem wet,  
5 a.m., always 5 a.m., and this time I think  
there are dozens of dead bees bundled in the sheets,  
their thoraxes and wings wet—with what?  
Not even the air is moist.  
Not even my hairline now that I've shaved  
my temples and nape so I won't feel  
a man's hands in that hair.  
The way he turned from me  
is so far outside my narrative  
I decided to consider Eve,  
the weight of what she could sense  
but never witness:  
complete devastation,  
bees, and all their companions,  
everything in the archive of earth  
damp and beyond resurrection,  
her foresight my only understanding  
for the total dread I feel  
against my arid longing,  
that there are not even bees,  
nothing but my belly against my thigh.

I imagine Eve, her automatic credibility,  
her logic not yet accidental,  
no one to review evidence against her,  
no one to collect her papers  
then read them generations later,  
saying: "She lied, she was kind,  
and not exacting at all. She wrote dozens  
of letters to Satan asking after his heart,  
under the pressure of his choices."

I consider Eve and the first time  
Adam turned from her, after some argument  
that certainly involved naming, valuing,

what it was for someone to spend a night  
truly lonely while not alone, his sleeping back  
to her, and her saying, "Well, I have my own  
two arms, and the faculty to catalogue:  
Tonight is the first night one hand  
held tight the other." Or the first time  
Adam attempted to lead her down a path  
and she insisted it was a gorge,  
its bottom water and snakes,  
and she sat right where she'd been standing  
until the sun set. By that time, she'd seen  
enough refusals to know how to sit on sediment.  
Or, the first time her very eyes  
were a seasonal path, restricted by vines  
and branches hard to strip or snap,  
and her pupils said: "You may not enter  
until the ground has thawed."  
Adam paused and measured the snow at his feet.  
Or the first time she was in his arms,  
dizzy from too much sleep,  
and relaxed further into him,  
laid into him:  
"We are not a biological imperative.  
We were joined by the impulse for story."