

with meager flesh left on her
bones, wanting me to put my
mozart on the stereo.
she loved mozart.
in her youth she had been a
very promising violist,
but injury and shock
from a fire made her
a ghost of her old talent.
her old self, for that matter.
i used to feed her too
at times, the miniscule
amount that she
could eat. she loved
sharing a cold sandwich
as much as she loved
mozart. i told her
it took a lot of solitude
to write a poem
she told me it took
a lot of solitude
to die.

THE PEAR AND THE EARTH

a terrible grayness today, such a
grayness that i can hardly bring myself
to mention it. and it's as though
it was coming through the walls, seeping
through them, and filling the house like
at night the sounds of insects do.
what can i do but stand at the window
facing the back field, and stare out
while eating a bright green pear.
and certainly i enjoy the pear,
but i almost hate to see it disappear:
it was my only truly effective relief
against the otherwise overwhelming
grayness. and if i'm not mistaken,
i think i remember being told, when i
was a kid in school, that the earth
was not actually shaped like a ball,
but rather like a pear. now that
i think of this i am sorry that i
don't have the whole pear before me,
not only to benefit from the bright
green of it, but also that
i might contemplate the shape
of the earth. and no, i do not
have any other pears; that was
the last one standing between me
and this grayness that is as

persistent as ants or the ocean.
i suppose if i feel the urge
to muse over the shape of the
earth, i must settle for looking
out on the back field,
although it's obvious that
this field gives me very little
to go on. and forget any
greenness out there.
unfortunately, so far spring
has been very stingy.
but i don't question this
stinginess; i accept it.
it is just how this season wishes
to express itself. for my
own sanity i must be as
gracious of spirit as possible.
i lie in my cold bed
looking at the grayness
clinging to the ceiling,
as slowly i
recite the alphabet
to myself.

LASAGNA

father's day, today; hot day, muggy too.
brought over a book on gardening, wrapped
in chinese newspapers i'd asked for while
picking up some take-out. a photograph too,
wrapped in the same newspapers, taken of me and
my father by my landlord's oldest son, who had
enlarged and placed it in a plastic frame.
in this photo i have my father in a headlock
which he cannot escape from. my face
is stern, unplayful, looking straight
at the camera, and i am standing very erect.
his face is crazy with laughter, and he looks
exactly like he does in a photograph
taken of him when he was five years of age.
we took our usual stroll through the garden.
i took the safari hat from the garage
and the sunglasses from my car, and we
went up one row and down another.
it's very scientific and immaculate, this
garden of his. the sweet potatoes
were just starting to assert themselves
above ground. he was in good spirits, and
for the most part i registered
everything he said. this year
i want to make a video of my father
working in his garden, and get