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## 3 A.M.: Put Pedro to Sleep

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### 3 A.M.: PUT PEDRO TO SLEEP

I know exactly what death looks like

downy hills      pale green  
                         tufts of cottonwood trees  
ribbon of road, ribbon of river.

The needle, long and shiny. . . .

Her breath rises and I feel for it.  
She's small.

                         During the apneas  
   the little pauses

she might drift      as on a hang glider

over that      landscape.

I almost pushed him down

                         the cliff

                         on Canyon Road  
                         on his last day      today

I thought about it

Pedro, companion  
                         of my loneliness

                         my solitary glides, at night,  
over those hills.

Why do they call it

putting to sleep?

At night

we turn ourselves over to God.

In the spring      on the first warm  
   hot days

that force the buds open

                 force purple-scented lilac  
                         from dun-leaved bushes  
people want

                         to feel the sun and air again.

They take off their shirts

then,  
                 their heads

with a gun, with. . . .

My baby and I keep our shirts on,

stay on this side.

Pedro scrabbles up the edge

across the stones  
in rapid water.

Pedro, ball of will  
and bites,  
wagging his white-tipped tail  
when he comes to me.

He'll be put to sleep.

At first, his rest will be very dark;  
then, wisps of dawn  
will fill the house;

he'll scratch to be let out  
his black and brown tank-shaped body  
will trot down the sidewalk  
his toenails will click  
his collar will jingle

an hour later  
he'll return from Smith's  
as he does  
every morning

from scrounging the dumpster

with a whole roast chicken

a dozen spareribs raw or cooked

a freshly baked loaf of bread  
still in its cellophane. . . .