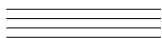


T H E E D G E O F L I G H T



R A C H E L H A D A S

Stop looking back over your shoulder.
Put out your hand; toss death into the water.
Once your hand is empty of ashes,
the moving memories slow down, then stop.
Your hand, beloved. Eyes in every finger.

The tiny island where my mind takes shelter:
lighthouse, ferry boat, harbor, huddled houses.
Evenings at supper time windows light up.
Weekday mornings children go to school.
Colors of sea and sky.

Oranges, coconuts, lilies, chipped white plate:
where were these offerings finally consumed?
Appetite of a force too deep to fathom:
the winter Pacific swallowed the fruit.
Bare foot stamping on a cold blue floor

one two three times: the soul
unraveling from the heart, coaxed from the breast
hand over hand, a rope coiled, burden drawn
out into candlelight, the mystery opened
whose transformations did and do not stop.

Mantle of feathers smoothed, a dove's soft plumage,
covering eyes with hands, covering face with wings,
the body wrapped in strong protective silence.
Eyes in the wings. Eyes in each strong finger.
To reach and touch forever.

Two verticals joined by one horizontal:
a doorway set up on a green hillside.
Who passes through is changed.
Do we know when we walk through that door?
The interior threshold

is only intermittently visible.
Apple tree at the bottom of the meadow:
I shake a branch, fruit falls,
I fill my skirt and waddle to the house.
Sun low but bright

mornings. You walk up a little hill.
The early mist
dissipates, sun kisses the White Mountains.
Now you are coming down.
Paradise: where you enter.