i.

My “ally” here (“nurse” is discouraged) downplays our differences — “Everyone has issues.” Hers leave the facility however at five. An English major before getting her LPC from Idaho (“I love Moscow, but for a true Phoenician A-Zee’s home”), she notes the “poetic effects” to my self-conceptions, their “theatricality.” “But, darling, what if that is me?” (“Darling” is discouraged too).

ii.

Countless in number and kind, and growing at astonishingly acute angles to the steep terrain above the lake, evergreens rise. A few, fallen, point straight down, their needles brittle brown.

Admiration and dismay fail at the light-hearted sensitivity
of aspen to the slightest breeze, to sunlight itself, and to the seasons, change —
O moved, untroubled tree!

iii.

At uncertain intervals meant I suppose to keep us on our toes, even as we lose our feet in the psyche’s surf, “Solitary” excursions are encouraged, though we know we’re never alone, tracked like animals by infallible devices.

Even had one a mind to there’s no escaping the mind, no getting anywhere but back along waxed corridors to the smirched self’s command center.

iv.

Say they “found” me face down, tripped up by the ankle-high barbed wire fence around an old farmhouse, its roof too collapsed, ripe prunes spilling from my hands. The fruit laden limbs of the tree appealed to me.
Inviting me to eat one
after another, an aching
bellyful, to taste
for the turning
of sour to sweet.

v.

Pleasure domes dot
the shores, pleasure
craft ply the waters. Golf
balls fly to the Black Rock’s
painstakingly-maintained
fairways & greens
on a hilltop sheared
of forest. Still moose

It’s open season on the poor
in spirit.

Hope is mistaken.

vi.

She won’t have it, of course —
young, dogmatic
in her refusal to believe
anything true that’s too
depressing.

“Sorry, darling. I’ll go
quietly.”

Who needs me?
vii.

Evergreens so they can soar,
the lapping of lake water
bore. Blue sky be
merciless.