

## Listen

I want to tell you something. This morning  
is bright after all the steady rain, and every iris,  
peony, rose, opens its mouth, rejoicing. I want to say,  
wake up, open your eyes, there's a snow-covered road  
ahead, a field of blankness, a sheet of paper, an empty screen.  
Even the smallest insects are singing, vibrating their entire bodies,  
tiny violins of longing and desire. We were made for song.  
I can't tell you what prayer is, but I can take the breath  
of the meadow into my mouth, and I can release it for the leaves'  
green need. I want to tell you your life is a blue coal, a slice  
of orange in your mouth, cut hay in your nostrils. The cardinals'  
red song dances in your blood. Look, every month the moon  
blossoms into a peony, then shrinks to a sliver of garlic.  
And then it blooms again.

—Barbara Crooker