

## Wishful Thinking

To avoid you I go to the toilet,  
push dust around the cellar, swipe the slick decay  
of leaves from the gutter. Nothing revolts you.  
You're so bored you're falling out of the sky  
but persistent as sleet,  
not like myself whose Bible stops at January,  
page-a-day saved by inertia from Easter.

Sometimes you ask me to lie down in the middle of haste  
like a madman's blanket. Before how many doorways  
will I be thrown down?  
Sometimes at dawn I climb the rope with monkey hands  
up past fear and gravity, beyond hoarding myself.  
An animal knows how much it can take.  
I hoist the weights like a rower, one and the other and one.  
Don't tell me yet what trial this is training for.

You're the pillow under my head  
and over it. You're the hole in the road  
that the gas truck hits, jackknifing into gorgeous flame.  
The woods above the highway are dark with bears.  
A lost child sees the glow, stumbles back to her parents' camper.

And what if there were no one pursuing? No storm  
to blow my windows out? I could sleep without whispers,  
wake without guarding my eyes.  
My friend the rational sunshine  
says you're wishful thinking, Santa-Claus daddy  
come down through ashes just to indulge me.  
Oh, but it's cold on the roof of my life  
under the flashbulb moon,  
with no rumors of hooves sharpening above.  
No one to know when I've been sleeping,  
or with whom.

Now that you've gone, I won't look at the shapes of clouds,  
dream-beasts that can't resist your tearing apart.  
No face remains; love's rubbings even unpaint the doll's cheeks.  
Spare me this corner, I said, and you left  
the whole field bare  
under an endless platter of good weather.  
Wishful thinking: that moment darkened by the brush of evening  
when the child locked in the toystore wants to be found.

-Jendi Reiter