

The Only Boy in New York

Wouldn't that be lonely,
him having Manhattan Island
all to himself.

My body New Jersey and Brooklyn wrapped round
the moat inside of me and he
is Manhattan,

transparent construction workers
tapping at his fragile bones,
with hammer, awl, and nail.

This week his fingerprints,
next week salty air
on the West Harlem pier.

Give him a dirty water hot dog—
It's what he pounds his fists for.
Listen.

Send him to Columbia, to NYU,
with their hallways deserted, chalkboards
long abandoned. And tell him he's a genius.

Hold his hand tight down the 1 line
to see the sperm whale in the sky,
his hands outstretched and eyes wide,
bright.

And let him go
as he pulls at your hand
begging to jump on the whale's back

and ride it down the Hudson
to the Atlantic
to be with its people.

For Unborn Annie

What will I be like with you

I wonder
in ten or twenty?

Will my voice change
monotonous like the distant voice
narrating *next stop Ballard Avenue*
as I describe for you my day,

a list of events
for which my body
alone was there?

Will I become beige with you,
Taupe Dream, Mauve Majesty

or will I dress you
in all the patterns we own,
horizontal stripes and leopard print?
We will be blood red
and turquoise stone.

Dear one, if you please,

fly on my back up the black mesa,
the warm breath of August
turning north to our neighbors
and further:
Nebraska, the Dakotas,
and that strange, far Saskatchewan.