The screaming of an animal in pain is like the chiming of a clock.
—Descartes

This little machine has stalled.
It shrieks,
wound tight for the final time
with the aid
of a needle, a vial.
It’s knee deep in pellets.
The syringe to its oil can is dry.

Sometimes death appears like a buzzard.
Or a worm.
But this death is rust.

This little calico machine has stalled.
I tilt my ear to the silky panel over its gears
to check if they still tick.
Or if I now can lay it to rest.

from the Polish
On the wings of triptychs
ancient saints
displayed their wounds.
The head and breast.
Arrows and rack.
Their round disks of copper showed
the cost of witness to be so frightening
that most discerning viewers turned away
with distaste
toward Protestantism.

Today the chosen
look placid, even blasé.
They hook us in
with the treacly smiles
of the terminally ill,
the dignified face of a child
in a group portrait,
or a passport photo
exposing the left ear—
three mug shots in a file
with bloodless lips appearing
incapable of love.
How terribly ordinary they appear, and weak.
How could they let themselves be captured
in this light-sensitive field?
But let us believe in the wisdom of photography.  
In the dust beneath the ground  
a potential image  
awaits exposure.

Light  
and breath.

*from the Polish*
FROM THE BOOK OF JOB

God,
please put me to the test,
I ask on my own account;
suffering, ugliness—fine,
degradation—good,
persecution—so be it!
Even leprosy—no complaint.
My God,
I beg of you,
test me straightly,
swiftly,
and alone.
Without agents and translators,
without intermediaries.
And if you manage to do
all that I ask,
remember,
I entreat you,
remember:
either do not listen
when those I love
ask of you the same,
or make me over
from the beginning and forever
absolutely alone.

from the Polish