Something is about to pass through. If we stand still enough. If we sleep
too fitfully.

Early morning’s glimmer of steel,
the trees—.

Just to feel it rushing
to stop.

Migration is a kind of afterlife—

flight that follows no
particular event.

But by this day last year the white-throated sparrows had arrived,
successive notes, like silver flecks.

They never stay for long; they’re on the way to Canada.

May 5. The absence is too high and thin
to miss.

*I saw no Way—The Heavens were stitched*—
The smaller birds more comfortable with stars fly mostly at night.

The nearby woods let darkness in and out so easily it pools each dusk at every trailhead.

And a little dark that stays in us in the daytime waits.

Now that snow is gone we find it: 
*Alyce Olsen* on a Nature Center brick.

Antique handwriting of the chisel, all you say are names and numbers subject to dissolve.

Sunrise and sunset each make a path one into light one into dark but that is not where we are going except maybe for the waxwings scavenging sideways, east and west in flocks, following the berry line.
Deer are the color of trees
when out of mud the dusk makes everything.

Deer are the nothing color at the edge of woods—

three of them poised at the curve
as we are driving by

but as luck would have it
nothing gets hit here tonight,

they don’t break from safety as a deer will do

barging out into nothing—a different kind—

The river far below
is said to be for birds a low-pitched sound.

The river mangles everything we must have said.

The water is arriving, it is going away.
There are flecks of seed and talk

of sweetness not yet manifested in the brambles.
I don’t know what instinct is,

but it gets birds talking up in the trees,
towhees so high you don’t ever spot them

singing drink your tea
while down on earth you wonder—
will we remember the art
of flinging each other so lightly
we rise, each of us, like many ghosts, not one?

Two deer down the river talked to the water
with their heads down low

just after you and your father let her go.
I don’t know, I don’t know

what ever comes of this. But they said it anyway.

And when we looked up again, they were gone.
SEPTEMBER RAIN

It is raining everywhere;
   rain is so monotonous
or is that mind?
   For really, morning is manageable
and specific, a series of windows
   changing like a Quik-Stop
camera trained now
   on the counter, now on the backs
of customers always impatient
   to pay, now on the parking lot
where after midnight emptiness
   sometimes trades itself in
for a car or two.
   In every scene it is raining
though the cat keeps changing
   windows as if to find a sunny day
out there. Sometimes her head jerks,
   tracing the path of whatever
is passing erratically above or below
   what I can see from here,
bird or squirrel or even the rain
   slanting sideways, transcribed
by her neck and eye muscles
   but only occurring to me
as something I will never see
   or even guess precisely enough
as if my mind were wearing glasses
   composed entirely of middle distances,
so when I look up from my book
everything gets hazy right at the places trees
turn into the possibility
there could possibly ever again
be sunlight and, behind it, a night
where stars wait to begin.