

## Elephant

You always act surprised that I am here  
as though through day's advance I'd disappear.  
You knew in morning -- even said goodbye --  
yet in the evening greet me with a sigh.  
I'm too big for you to hide away,  
a long-time boarder who will always stay  
right here, abrupt, with hunger never filled,  
with trunk that's always busy, skilled  
at building barricades to happiness  
in ways that you can never guess  
until they're done and you come home to find  
these bricks I've shuffled in; you're never blind  
yet try to shoo me out like I'm some fly --  
a tiny thing you set no importance by  
but you always know I'm here, your secret doom,  
though no one else sees me,  
Elephant,  
in the room.



## Prince of the Apple Towns

When Dad was prince of the apple towns  
I was minor princess of the Washington realm.  
My brother and I would mourn, later,  
for blossoms and lilacs and something warm  
that we almost knew in the early years

before democracy of a mother's kind:  
a move to a city house with roses--  
left behind the red and yellow apples  
that graced the Fall with scent.

When Dad was prince of the apple towns  
we were neither up nor down  
but on the rise, in a tiny house  
with hope for place and community.  
When we left him behind  
did the prince feel the shift, did the earth's crust crack  
on the dry brown hills, in the irrigated orchards?

Did a sun-warm apple on one summer day  
have meaning to him who gave it away  
or was it simply an easy gift to the visitor  
who happened to be me, his daughter?  
His kingdom was strange to me who lived elsewhere,  
dethroned. Was his sky still blue 'til the end? He never said.



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