

All Things

by Anna Fortner

Praise the heart you bruise when you say, "I'm too busy."

Praise the untethering, the whip and burn, the grasping,
the lights of the city burning in the distance,
when still the next morning your husband turns away
as if anything
is of more interest to him
than you.

Praise your eldest, in a fit of pique fueled by the kindling of your ire,
the way she slams chicken nuggets to the floor like a deranged magi,
your dog who eats them like manna.

Praise the axons of your brain and the mystery of paradox
for the shame and pride hurled through you when she says,
"I just need you to hug me."

Praise the wilderness of your weakness for making her good and strong.

Praise the tufted chest of the red tail hawk whirling overhead,
the pounding of the pigeons' wings as they alight from the sycamores,
the broad leaf that falls
as if sinking through water
into the hands
of your youngest,
the cardboard wings your eldest made for her
looped to her arms
with hairbands.

Praise the closed system of yourself,
the solitude of dark mornings,
the weight you can carry,

the joy you spin
like a spider web
glossed with dew
and shimmering in the soft dawn light.

Praise what makes your love visible.

Your morning *metta*: chipping the dried peanut butter from the Ball jar your
husband uses for his daily smoothie,
the cold faucet water on your hands.

Your morning prayer: washing the lid by hand, setting it to dry on a clean
dish towel.

Praise those days he loves you so right you move through the world daring as a
sunflower.

Praise the delight your eldest takes in your chance encounters with golden retrievers,
how she exclaims and nudges until you see it too,
how she looks from the dog to you,
from you to the dog,
lit up with the same
wild
self-forgetful
love you feel for her.

Praise the daily lessons she learns
from who and how you are in the world,
how even this is one, this lowering to your knees,
and sinking your hands
into the feathery down
behind the dog's ears,
into the current of goodness that runs through all things.