

*Burden of Care*

I have steamed the fucking spinach  
without a single flake of salt  
and I have let it dissolve  
like wet sand and jellyfish  
in the grottos of my tonsils.

I have circled the block  
in my embarrassment of sneakers.  
Swinging again this cowbell  
of pharmaceuticals,  
I am circling the block.

I alarm myself early,  
even on the weekends.

Yes, I've been doing the stretches.  
Yes, I've been wearing the brace.

Of course I've kept a journal  
of all my aches and visions.

But still I am a tower  
of wet and sudsy baubles.  
Still I feel these wires snapping.

The doctor and I  
have been playing mancala  
with pills and their milligrams  
and, oh, their interactions.

The doctor is winning.

*Expect to gain weight.*  
*There will always be pain.*  
*The trick is in the maintenance.*

And perhaps I'll be all right.

The wisest and the wellest  
all swear by their routines.

But I don't want to think  
about my body anymore.

I want to learn Spanish  
for real and for good.

I want to watch all day  
for indigo buntings  
and run to tell my wife.

*Better*

I've been fooled before,  
but I think I'm getting better.

I think I'm breathing deeper  
and I think I'm seeing clearer  
and fewer situations lately  
call for drastic measures.

This might not be related,  
but I think I'm getting taller.  
I am discovering the dusty  
tops of cabinets. There  
are bald spots I had not  
considered on people  
I thought I knew.

There is no way to prove this,  
but I think I can leave my house  
again, more often and for longer.

I will have to account  
for this gap in my résumé.  
I will have to reevaluate  
the duties of my wardrobe.

It will be hard to explain  
how bad it used to get.  
Even harder, I mean,  
than it's always been.

I could be imagining things,  
but all around me, neon  
lights are dimming.

Someone's cleared the rubble.  
The sirens, as it happened,  
meant no harm at all.

Knock on wood and grain of salt,  
but could it be that all this time  
there was half a solution  
to half the problem?

My madness is modest,  
my pain is Advillable.

I am rolling down  
the long sock of death.

And when I imagine  
something beautiful,  
something beautiful  
contains me.