

Riddle

The ice has vanished from the smoldering stream, weeping fingers of winter slid from the splintered trees.

The canyon I am learning through my feet is secretive and dull, its bluefire gifting the swelling city and lake. Spring is late here and melancholy . . . this morning a mountain lion leapt down the narrow road looking for something to kill.

My child is troubled with fears of abandonment. How will you find me if I am lost here, or here? She pushes her face into the wind, perhaps remembering another rush of air, a freefall, an entry of blood, water and loss.

I learned early the limits of love. Children can be given only the residue of a heart struggling to heal itself, the remainder of a spirit seared with passion and ambition. And does it matter if I croon to this child

I will never leave your bright eyes, your sturdy little body? She knows a lie. She must turn from the hunter, run home with lilacs in her teeth.

—Nancy Baird