

## *On Being a Muse*

I'm sorry to have to tell you this  
but through no fault of yours  
you have become my muse.  
Not to worry,  
you don't have to do any extra work.

You might be watching by the shore  
a crane lifting off in the ecstasy of morning.  
You might be mopping up your kitchen  
or sipping tea in a cozy den  
or composing a symphony in the medium of your choice.

There are no special qualifications for being a muse.  
You can even be unemployed.  
Obviously it's not what a muse does  
but what a muse is  
a presence for which no metaphor is final.

If I am a ship  
the muse is the inexhaustible treasure  
drinking exotic cocoa  
hidden from others.

If I am the treasure  
the muse is the inexplicable spark  
that transforms raw metal  
into coin.

If I am a trowel  
the muse is the map  
that guides the hand to seams in the earth  
where penetration is harmonious  
and deep.

If I am the map  
the muse is the hand  
that blesses the map  
that never complains or gets tired  
of being itself.

If I am a tree  
like the elm of our childhood  
the muse is a bird that settles there  
and the tree knows the bird's language,  
its branches and leaves move and tremble in fluent harmonies  
as the bird celebrates its life.

*(cont'd)*

If I am the bird  
the muse is the tree that offers a world  
into which poems arrive and echo in the magical air.

When I behold my muse  
here or not here  
everything is touched by the wand of arising

and the stars which yesterday were so far from me  
tonight will be even farther  
in worlds so much larger than any poem or song.