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by Anne Campbell

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Five Poems:

Beginning

Time Comes To Houses On Sundays

Trees Take Account Of The Air — *after St. Peter's Abby*

The Grass And Me In The Morning — *after St. Michael's*

Falling Into The Sky — *after Emily Dickenson*

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THE BEGINNING

I picked up a stone that day walking in the hills, it wasn't the first. It was later when I was washing them, all the stones I'd brought home, this one made itself clear to me. Small its shape, and its colour moves away from description, is palest tawny yellow, intermingled not separate from a colour that on its own might be white. Fused cracks or fused flaws contain minute specks of black I imagine in time might wear away.

This description does not account for the appeal of the stone which creates a softness around my neck and down from my ears. Creates a softness in the centre of my encasing soul. My body is my soul the place where spirits enter and rest. My body is my beginning, spirit enfleshed.

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TIME COMES TO HOUSES ON SUNDAYS

Going out of my house to work, but wanting to stay
home, wanting a respite, no, something more smooth
something silent, an interval, an interim, a

lunation:
long enough
for the moon to circle
a month of Sundays and gold
light to shine
through blinds
touching the hard
wood floor

A month of Sundays enough space
for a pattern of habit to form
round the lake walking
back to the warm
fragrance of dinner
in the fall
night comes early

A month of Sundays and time gentles down, urges:

take it easy, she
mutes the day, calls attention
to herself.
Time reminds
beyond the world
she is there
the fabric
of day

TREES TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE AIR

after St. Peter's Abbey

1. Walking early morning across the monastery yard

air breathing breeze

ruffling dark poplar trees already

I've walked our country road,

eaten eggs coddled for breakfast,

found a monk who's found a tape recorder,

my new song waiting to be sung,

"Light works as an anointing material,

works its way, works its way into my body ..."

2. the day barely begun but alive I hear

leaves almost name

the feeling on my face they are trying

to say: listen, you are happy. This rustle I take to mean

content.

3. Trees do not let you down, oh their leaves bend, and

daily they shake out their grief, but

only the rarest tornado can fell one, pruned well they withstand

even

this;

trees I think of as answers, love

in solitary monastery air

THE GRASS AND ME IN THE MORNING

after St. Michael's

Walking again I always start the words

walking

grass tall by the side of the road tall
by the side of the road that makes its way up the hill where

Franciscans live
and writers retreat inside bodies and roads

lead everywhere

but back
to the tall green grass beside me as I walk:

do the blades, each, as I do,
think to themselves seeing me beside their prairie nest, on a hill,

does grass think: *does it not*

make sense to think

we, the grass (speaking for itself) and (me) the woman walking

are in love

breathing in and out of one another this morning

a marriage with the prairie grass at ease

FALLING INTO THE SKY

after Emily Dickinson

Saying yes to a poem
about Emily, writing her back or simply
responding the invitation said simply respond and Emily is
slipping out of her house to her porch
at dusk coupling with the tender night air in love
she glows

can't keep it straight doesn't even try she mixes her words
with birds and God the air we all breathe and

my grandson, Thomas, says: the world is turning

everything moving so fast

a person could fall into the sky Emily too

is falling

in love with the sting of a star screaming past afraid

she writes every particle of the world touching her skin and the sky

this cold winter: Emily's words soft as stones (set down

on a summer cloth) slip into my heart

undivided

she writes the birds of the sky the stars

she writes the very air together.