

# Morning Song

Leanne Hoppe

I wanted to stay  
where the rocks striated and limited my view;

where the wind's whir against nylon at night created  
a wave, sweeping us out and back in;

where I didn't wonder the path of a soul as it travels,  
whether inheritance could be weightless;

I wanted to stay in the endless meadow  
below the valley's lid;

where the only cries were cicadas  
and the echo of a metal clink;

on the red soil of a place you never reached  
where I meditate among and within a crevice;

in the place where, if I could stay one moment longer,  
I could make sense of it.

# Repeat

Leanne Hoppe

Not bad, the neutral tan in every room  
which seems to say *nothing* and again  
*nothing*. The way it is out here:  
almost enough—

If you say *moving*  
enough times, it becomes true.

Sit as they pray before a meal  
enough times, you will, too.

The sense you had about yourself,  
a regard for paper as it turned  
to ash, the smell of vinegar.

Does it freeze and vanish  
the way snowflakes appeared,  
hanging in the air, an endless loop?

Sometimes a stare doesn't produce  
an image more clear:  
Look across to the other side  
of the table where you sat,  
whispering *moving* all this time,  
and you'll see him, contented  
with a cherry tomato—  
sleeve tugging at a grin, our lad.

# Grounding

Leanne Hoppe

I

I tried it, too. Imagining  
my forcefield, hollow-stuffed to bump against.  
This is a boundary, not contact.

II

I got too much of its negative  
charge, thinking this must be freedom  
like childhood, like barefoot  
on the gravel, like connection must be.

III

What's missing, what will transform  
me back to whoever I was:  
content enough, easy enough.  
Not too delicate to touch.

IV

Don't you ever sit and wonder at all  
that you don't know?  
You used to. I still do.  
What not Siri or Alexa  
or Calliope or Memory  
or my Horoscope or God, not  
anyone can answer—  
where's Andy gone?

V

The open spaces  
the teacher told me to draw:  
a triangle here, below the arm.  
A boundary for the image.

VI

What's missing isn't  
space. It's a charge  
that I can't find in the ground,  
in contact or boundary.

# Twice, Soldier

Leanne Hoppe

•

John Hayes, my neighbor. John Hayes walking  
in the street, safest teetering the yellow line.  
That's why it's painted. Fireworks from the pond,  
the light reached us in the basement.

•

I saw you: once in my dream,  
then in my semen, dripping like licorice,  
I let it dangle along my cock. Did you remember  
saying the same thing twice?

•

The cement is cold, it's full of water.  
She's got shit running down her back, my pistol  
to her rib. This kind of gun doesn't kill anyone.  
Take the picture, John. Make it nice.

•

John, tell them I'm home.  
Tell them I've been here a year.  
I never swallowed. I never spit.  
You saw me: your face followed me.