

## Joanna Newsom "In California"

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My heart became a drunken runt  
on the day I sunk in this shunt,  
to tap me clean  
of all the wonder  
and the sorrow I have seen,  
since I left my home:

My home, on the old Milk Lake,  
where the darkness does fall so fast,  
it feels like some kind of mistake  
(just like they told you it would;  
just like the Tulgeywood).

When I came into my land,  
I did not understand:  
neither dry rot, nor the burn pile,  
nor the bark-beetle, nor the dry well,  
nor the black bear.

But there is another,  
who is a little older.  
When I broke my bone,  
he carried me up from the riverside.

To spend my life  
in spitting-distance  
of the love that I have known,  
I must stay here, in an endless eventide.

And if you come and see me,  
you will upset the order.  
You cannot come and see me,  
for I set myself apart.  
But when you come and see me,  
in California,  
you cross the border of my heart.

Well, I have sown untidy furrows  
across my soul,  
but I am still a coward,  
content to see my garden grow  
so sweet & full

of someone else's flowers.

But sometimes  
I can almost feel the power.  
Sometimes I am so in love with you  
(like a little clock  
that trembles on the edge of the hour,  
only ever calling out "Cuckoo, cuckoo").

When I called you,  
you, little one,  
in a bad way,  
did you love me?  
Do you spite me?  
Time will tell if I can be well,  
and rise to meet you rightly.  
While, moving across my land,  
brandishing themselves  
like a burning branch,  
advance the tallow-colored,  
walleyed deer,  
quiet as gondoliers,  
while I wait all night, for you,  
in California,  
watching the fox pick off my goldfish  
from their sorry, golden state--  
and I am no longer  
afraid of anything, save  
the life that, here, awaits.

I don't belong to anyone.  
My heart is heavy as an oil drum.  
And I don't want to be alone.  
My heart is yellow as an ear of corn,  
and I have torn my soul apart, from  
pulling artlessly with fool commands.

Some nights  
I just never go to sleep at all,  
and I stand,  
shaking in my doorway like a sentinel,  
all alone,  
bracing like the bow upon a ship,  
and fully abandoning  
any thought of anywhere  
but home,  
my home.  
Sometimes I can almost feel the power.  
And I do love you.  
Is it only timing,  
that has made it such a dark hour,

only ever chiming out,  
"Cuckoo, cuckoo"?

My heart, I wear you down, I know.  
Gotta think straight,  
keep a clean plate;  
keep from wearing down.  
If I lose my head,  
just where am I going to lay it?

(For it has half-ruined me,  
to be hanging around,  
here, among the daphne,  
blooming out of the big brown;  
I am native to it, but I'm overgrown.  
I have choked my roots  
on the earth, as rich as roe,  
here,  
down in California.)

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