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Cover art Kathleen Speranza
 Painting, "Nest with Twigs"

Origami Poetry Project

OPENING
@ KARA PROVOST,
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Opening

How joyfully the trees
 wear their new veil of green--
 halo of pale jade, glow
 of promised spring
 withheld,
 ready to burst
 into the sun's warm arms.

At the end of each supple twig,
 riding the biting breeze,
 a bud
 veined in red like an embryo
 waiting to unfurl
 a tender green tongue,
 test the air and open,
 open

Praise Song

(with recognition of W. S. Merwin)

You invisible one
 music of all the songs sung
 beat of wind, wing, breath
 you, purpling the violets
 after winter's death

swaying the lace curtain
 warming my skin with yellow
 lifting the scent of jasmine
 carrying voices through hollows

plunging kill spiral of hawk
 cooling green-shadowed woods
 singing spring water over rock
 grounding April with deep mud

you, shining on the flashing silver fishes
 heading the air with orange perfume
 feeding shoots reaching up through rot
 causing all the world to be still or move:

you invisible one
 music of all songs sung.

What We're Made Of

The whirring street cleaner grinds past,
 blasting away the sands of winter—
 handsprings begin again
 on lemony new grass.

Peppery peppermint pink verberna blossoms
 tremble
 in the breeze like little kisses,
 sweet fruit scent of beach roses
 among the thorns, disguised

by green foliage
 ready to prick the picker winding through dunes
 for a snip of sweetness
 to slip into a vase,

bring some life inside
 where we live with all our unalive
 things: stuffed chairs, stiff legs, dusty
 shelves mementos, but outside

all alive and moving:
 How did we get used to this
 life arranged
 in brick, concrete, and steel?

Sometimes after winter I forget
 how to go outside:
 Like captives released
 from their pens, we are slow
 to step out a toe, shed coats,
 untrusting of the green prickle underfoot
 mudsuck and vegetable scents,
 wind on skin.

We stay in where it seems safe
 and forget, forget
 we are made of all this.

Deep Wild

Where lies the wild in us,
 how sleepy, how deep?
 When did outdoors become a chore,
 passage from one door to the next,
 luxury we can no longer afford?
 How old was I when I gave up
 sitting in the sand,
 no towel or chair mediating,
 when trees ceased to be
 my jungle gym, ground
 turned to dirt?

In pens of our own creating we live
 like chickens so conditioned to their barracks
 they choose not to go outside.
 Sunlight shines a little square
 through the unused door
 onto the dusty floor.
 Somewhere deep inside dogs or cattle
 living circumscribed lives,
 wolf-wilt shadows run through woods
 and buffalo, massive, impassive
 move like storm clouds across the grass.

Where lives the wild in us,
 how far, how broad?
 Does our blood sing like a spring river
 when a south wind blows at night?
 Do we stop mid-step to watch
 the scarlet cardinal calling,
 try to spy his darker partner?
 Let the wild rise up
 when voices of sparrows, grackles, robins
 trill once quiet mornings,
 when the first evening peepers sing again
 in the boggy pond.
 Let booming bullfrog voices vibrate our
 hearts
 all summer long.