

Josephine's Divorce

It ends with a face in the window,
his or yours, the train's long whistle, something silver
in the eyes, foreign or friendly fire, jaws work
backwards, as if the last letters were capital.
Dissociative nouns dropped like fists on a table:
Tongue Kiss, Garret, Steeple, Cat.

It ends and the end becomes a cat,
a licked paw spied through a window.
You give the cat what's left, give up the table.
Pretend it's all his—the paw, the give-up, the silver
in the drawer. The cat curled like a country's capital
becomes the heart in a lonely state, its last great work.

When it ends prepare for promises or paper work.
Anything that begins with *p*. Call the cat
Panther or pride-n-joy. Play fast and easy with capital
letters, play rock and paper with the window.
Cut snowflakes out of tablecloth, bend everything silver.
Find reasons to be scared, to be under the table.

The sound of the end is a teacup on a table.
The smell is wet sidewalk from a rain missed at work.
It tastes like a mouthful of pennies, the seatbelt's silver.
The baby rabbit screaming from the mouth of the cat.
You know very well what it looks like, how each window
gives the same view, how it's always hot in some country's capital.

There simply must be a river at the end, a state capital
building crooked in its elbow. Perhaps a gypsy at a card table,
some magical thinking by the highway. A car window
down for directions. A crossing guard at work.
A stalling under tracks. A road kill stretch with bull's-eye cats.
The road is still gray, and the city—it's ok to say silver—

though there's never been a different end, a silver
lining. Remember the gold dome on the capital?
Remember why, in the first place, the cat?
There used to be campfires and a use for the table,
a good looking man and a reason to work.
A map with a legend, a rock through the window...

End with the legend: the window turned sideways, turned column capital,
turned silver hat. End when it's certain he's not coming back, when the table
turns into a poor working door, when you give up the crown, your king for a cat.