

ROGER NASH

## WAR WIDOW

At night, a uniformed shadow still tries  
to cross the bedroom wall. But it obscures  
nothing, not even the spider's web  
she forgot at the top left corner.  
In the morning, rain from a cloudless sky.  
The beggar at the door erases himself completely  
as she gives him bread. He leaves no  
tracks in the mud. As she breast-feeds  
her son, there's no screen between  
warm gums on chilled nipples,  
and dusty wedding photos on the shelf;  
no ditch between more rain  
and wolfing down a half-loaf  
of ready-sliced bread, each day of it  
identical and growing stale. Night.  
Night falls yet again. She lights  
a candle and stares at it endlessly, as mesmerized  
as a moth. But the cold in her full nipples  
isn't warmed away. Instead, it's lit up.

## TELLING THE TIME BY SALVADOR DALI'S MELTING WATCH

A fish is drawn up  
from the depths in a water-spout:  
like a naked woman with blonde  
hair and shining eyes  
—or a very luminous watch.

Between this second and the next,  
the pre-historic fly  
continues to buzz and die  
in its ever-falling tear of amber.

The spider shrivels to a dot  
in the dusty bath. The walls  
of Carthage burn in Augustine's  
inflammable heart—and fall.  
History's taps won't turn.

Yesterday limps across fields  
like a hungry fox. It can't,  
not quite, catch the broken  
-down garbage-truck.

For new lovers, the bed's  
headboard takes flight,  
knocking unashamedly  
on dividing walls and thoughts.  
They unfold tousled wings.

Next door, a clock  
listens voyeuristically. It forgets  
to tick. The future just isn't  
what it used to be.

## ROWAN TREE

At noon, our rowan tree  
is a red waterfall of berries.  
Another battle upstream?

At dusk, boughs of lipsticked  
girls, bunched mouths  
eager to be admired, even kissed.

Our rowan, that sprang from seed  
in droppings that plashed, unplanned  
but urgently, from a gull chasing

scraps in a garbage truck.  
For life's cycles to continue,  
whether in battles or love—

gulls must chase trucks.