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FROM *THE PAIN RELIEVER*

When I go under
I see the same things.
My hair always blowing.
There is always wind
or speed or the inability
to tell the difference
that is letting go of pain.

Anesthesia is like therapy,
only the doctor does all the talking.

There is no hurry.

It takes pain to remove pain,
to know how to talk me to sleep.
I take my cue from the synesthesia blue,
a summer dark sky that smells like intentions.
My mistake was thinking I could be anything
other than hungry.

My mistake was thinking I could be anything other.
I too am the unmaking—
eyes that give the first signs of danger.

It takes pain to identify pain.
Snow might be required,
best carried in a wooden box
packed lightly with cotton wool.
In an ordinary huckaback hand towel

folded into three—
 early methods of collecting
 antecedents of the already misplaced.

Suggestion is a comfortable narcosis,
 but never bid a patient breathe deep.
 It takes pain to inspire confidence.
 You must watch me get near the edge.

There is plenty of time.

It's the pulse that misleads
 when I've fallen far.
 It's been our mistake to confuse
 sorrow for suffering—
 which one do you see?

It began as a party game
 so we could bump into things and never feel;
 now it's the only way to get inside of me.

There is no hurry.

When the heart is acting badly
 it's pleasant and easy to give.
 With a few words of encouragement
 I may let go of the wheel.

There is plenty of time.

I let you undo
 quick—
 far away train whistle,
 ashes of a furnace furnished.
 Those limbs beginning to bud again—
 the plum tree scabs where the growth shoots.
 We won't say saw,
 we'll elide the sound of breaking.

There is no hurry.

The branches bend to snap—
I ask grief pardon.
A bridge threatened to draw up;
choke-pears too low, a vow, safe.
Do you know when to stop stitching?

The great secret of giving an anaesthetic
is not to feel hurried
to say occasionally *lots of time*.