

# Three Poems in March, after Baca

*by* Heather Fowler

In Plural

I could love them all, your people,  
Learn their differences, speak their tongues,  
When there is no one there to hold you  
But me, my arms would be wide enough  
To hold armies of your need. Do not forget.

Forget neither how the sands of time will wrap us,  
How we will age and falter and fall apart; do not  
Forget this, especially, as we cling together  
For dear life, in a storm, in the moment before  
A narrowly averted disaster of our loss, and if,

For one moment alone, you release me, have faith  
I shall return to you, shall grab you and hold you and  
Twirl you and kiss you into my oblivion, unless you don't  
Want me any further, unless you say so again and again,  
Until I am deaf to all but that, though this would

Be all. Be quiet. I love you that way. I could  
Love them all, your people: your aunts, your uncles,  
Your children, and your dreams. We could dwell together  
In these, make more. We are provident and powerful:  
Our loves can make mockeries of sorrows,

But only if you let my people in.

~

## Saying What You'd Like Me Say, When I Love You's Not Enough

I am offering this gone-girl to you  
Since there is nothing more you'll take:  
Keep it like the drafty door  
In your childhood house, nurture  
It like a venomous burr on a snake's side  
The warm cannot penetrate.

I despise you.

I have nothing more to grope from this now,  
Cannot grapple away that food  
To fill your fragile belly,  
Will not take your winter scarf, since I  
Live too far and cannot use it here.

I despise you,

Keep this hate, nurse it, as you would a bitter draught  
If you were warm and needing cold's revival  
In the ragged forest of summer rain when nature  
Might corner you to note I love you still,  
Bright doubt unleashed with clouds in mourning,  
When out of the dense trees, I'd come knocking,  
Or historic Mes might say, "I'll give you directions,  
Baby: Stand by my heat, rest in my heat, I will warm you,  
I will cherish you, and make you feel so safe," but

I despise you,

Have you heard enough to believe  
Me now; does this conform to the way you want to live  
Without guilt and without progress inside,  
When the world outside is crueler than I,  
And you hate my kindness because  
It breaks unwanted sweetness into truths? Remember,

I despise you.

~

Absentia Siren

I am sorry I missed your texts;  
Bloodroot and vanilla knives  
Colored my thinking, left at bay,  
Where yester-musings were kept  
As wives.

A small cat and a blood-red orange  
Made love on a counter,  
Rubbing cheek and peel.  
Small things caused me weep.  
Status quo.

Call me again tomorrow.  
I will wear my listening ear.  
You can wear your speaking mouth.  
Let's press one to the other,  
Whichever.

Together, I can try to be

Less absent. You can try  
To span the bolted miles  
With laughter, as I thank  
Your success.

