

Amy Schmitz

Daughter I am saying things to you

like sand seed storage
like always have something to sustain you, something
 of substance beneath your surface
always stay within yourself
withdraw but do not wither

I came from nothing
I was fed on nothing I decorated my hair
 with nothing so
I had to give you a pocket inside your graduation dress
I had to give you lockets nooks decades
I had to give you Dublin Paris Munich
 (you took Dakar Addis Nairobi)

Daughter I am saying things to you
like return but do not hurry
I am saying things to you like room ring restless
breach slip wood
lake border
you are turning them into ocean palisade downpour
I am saying things like mountain pine basin
you are turning them into canyon desert mesa

Daughter I am telling you
stay within yourself—there is no thirst for you
 elsewhere
there is no one you'll love like I do
go but do not linger

I came from nothing
I was bred on nothing I was wanted for nothing I looked
 for nothing so
I had to give you the wild outer edge green-gold spire needle-dry inland
 of Californian spring
thick skin to withstand loss
a spine to shed
curves for shelter