PRAYER

Mother, you are a fine warrior. Small birds, we go on,

Picking seeds from your palm, reading your skies. They are bruised

And suggest the bees we pray to. We sort pebbles, trade glass

From the riverbed, white, green, blue.

We send our own children to sea

To come back to us as fish we once hunted—steelhead, barracuda,

Albacore. We wish for the turtle to burrow deep in soaked earth,

The horse to strike geysers from pitted ground. Carry us otherwise.

The children come back. We make amulets — panther, whale,

Ptarmigan. Time and again, we believe we know what you want.

The sea pushes us inland to salt flats, where corn and desert

Bees lie buried, waiting for rain.

We cannot hear our little heretic gods,

Do not know what is to come, Mother. Carry us.