

“a mysterious inscription in latin, found in california”

they told me you had died, they
didn't tell me you'd blown your head off

which is not the kind of thing anyone wants
to have to tell someone else & you know what? maybe

you might have thought about that
before you did it, before you doomed her

to a decade of fucking elegy, the two books she
now has to write whether she wants to

or doesn't, first the slim gloss volume of keen
& shriek, gleam & mourn, then the waver

of coming back, of recover, raw new
lovers & sleeping motionless through a whole

night, of cooking food, the first cautious laugh
wondering if her skin will crack open

when did it get so hard, I remember when it was
not this difficult, or crowded, you could get along with

a pair of hiking boots, a small Swiss Army knife for
sword, a legal pad, one bottle of black ink

the little people in the refrigerator danced
on the mayonnaise & I shook grains of sand from

my socks, pulled burrs from bootlaces before
unzipping the down bag on the floor

one girl murmured of baby animals to fall asleep
while I lay silent alongside whirring blades & knives

pain carried a simplicity without which
I am no longer right about what I think I know

*(told you a tell, going to heal
told you a tale, going to hell)*

across their fields of artificial dust, the farmers
fail, there has been no rain

the crops will not be saved
I'm not even forty & I'm already tired

of elegies, tired of trying to find a new
stupid place to break each line & frankly I'm tired

of you, as tired as you were of us, or
life, or yourself, & made a decision, or anyway

maybe it seemed to be one at the time