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# Morning in Paradiso

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sizzling about, a frenzy of birds  
could gorge on our energy fields—

my God the spray of flies  
is how we feed on each other

the larger animals skin against skin  
sometimes from a distance of

hundreds thousands of miles.  
So forgive me again when I'm

amazed when my love lifts her ice-  
cream cone to my mouth and I crunch

into it, our energy that fur that wraps  
our hands touching, birds or no birds.

This right now I can count on:  
this ice-cream-cone shiver,

her red lips, her nostrils, the heat  
from her cheekbones on the back

of my hand, the yogurt cups  
I leave at job sites to prove

the next day I was really there.  
There's a terror when her car's not

in the driveway, there's this rip  
that won't seal itself up. She is gone

and the hole in the air where her heart  
went blazing through, her essence having

drenched the hickory bark and pole-barn  
metal—more skin we hammered into place.

There in the ice-cream parlor,  
there in the shivering liquid stillness,

the impossible happens:  
she wipes her mouth

with the back of her hand and it hisses  
as it travels to her shining teeth.

She laughs out gusts of flame  
and the birds in the ditches

cough up the beginning  
of the world.

ALAN SOLDOSKY

## Morning in Paradiso

Neal crying in his room will stop  
depending upon whether he wants to suck  
or not. He knows how to bring his mother  
to silence the caterwaul of his impulse,

to make her rise from bed at the threshold of dawn  
when all but the body's stirring is invisible  
and lift him out of the little dungeon  
of his crib to lay him against her breast,

the pillowy temple that men cleave to.  
I have a little song that wakes me in the dark.  
If I should get up, I'll lose it.  
Faint as chalk, it marks some fold in my brain

that will be forgotten when the day starts.  
She will come back to bed, and I'll lie there,  
my body an argument we haven't concluded.  
We don't touch, nor do we care to,

because by living our lives we are extinguished.  
Is that what Dante knew,  
lifting the burden from himself once and for all  
in the immense truth of his music.

She says nothing.  
She rubs sleep from her eyes  
under the blankets while the garbage men  
bang the cans in the driveway.

It sounds like they're in the bedroom.  
Though it's feeble, there's enough light  
through the curtain to mean it's morning,  
and Adam gets up to watch television.

The radio turns on by itself to the news,  
Outside, the neighbor starts his pick-up  
and in the eye of the swimming pool  
the sky lightens to blue.