

The traffic on the highway  
sounds like an ancient, injured  
animal, as I  
step out  
past my driveway.  
I'm careful to avoid holes  
in the street, full of rainwater.  
I don't see  
my reflection, just brown.

The houses are quiet  
in the middle of the day  
and a car sprints out of the tunnel  
in front of me.  
The dirty, scrawled-on walls close in,  
as I walk on what's left  
of a sidewalk.  
At the end in the grey light,  
I see the park, and beyond,  
the river.

It's not a park I take my kids to—my kids  
who love to run barefoot in grass.  
the land not so much wild, as  
uncared for.  
Two rusty stakes jut out of the hard ground,  
for a game of horseshoes I've never seen anyone play.  
There's a picnic table spotted with years of encrusted bird shit  
and nearly every board splintered.

But someone  
is keeping a small, wild garden.  
It's always overflowing with flowers  
and plants I do not know the names of.

I lean down and take  
in their perfume.  
*This.*