

Moving Heavy Things

I. BRAKING

From the yellow house to the little house,
warm windows to porch light powered by extension cord.
I take the dog with me, her blue eye flashing out at raccoons
pushing their little hands into the compost pile, her brown eye
tracking me, my course through the garden, past
green bell peppers, black in this dark light,
hanging their weight from such small stems.

II. TIGHTENING

Here is the hot twist of cotton into fist.
You keep imitating a crocus. Every morning
your hands turn white in the root
birth. I have this pile of shingles
and a barn side that needs repair. The overlapping
makes us tighten our grip most of all. The watertight
cedar helps us become lovers
of heft – the anvil your brother found
buried in the pig sty, the millstone you made into a table
in the back yard. Heavy things, they keep us.
It's the tightening of our fingers, and I'm thankful for the labor.

III. WRINGING DOWN

I am the level platform built in the north meadow.
I am the plumb corner of a barn eave.
I am the dark painted elm limb,
blackened with tar, used as a club.

IV. SWIGGING

I've learned to lean out hard. The motion
bends the body to it, is the silent show
of how a ball and socket works, the slow
roll of one surface against and inside another.

