

In the Middle of Your Day, This Is Just What You Wanted to Hear

I'm sorry to have to tell you this
but through no fault of yours
you have become my muse.
Not to worry,
you don't have to do any extra work.

You might be watching by the shore
a crane lifting off in the ecstasy of morning.
You might be mopping up your kitchen
or sipping tea in a cozy den
or composing a symphony in the medium of your choice.

There are no special qualifications for being a muse.
You can even be unemployed.
Obviously it's not what a muse does
but what a muse is
a presence for which no metaphor is final.

If I am a ship
the muse is the inexhaustible treasure
drinking exotic cocoa
hidden from others.

If I am the treasure
the muse is the inexplicable spark
that transforms raw metal
into coin.

If I am a trowel
the muse is the map
that guides the hand to seams in the earth
where penetration is harmonious
and deep.

If I am the map
the muse is the hand
that blesses the map
that never complains or gets tired
of being itself.

If I am a tree
like the elm of our childhood
the muse is a bird that settles there
and the tree knows the bird's language,
its branches and leaves move and tremble in fluent harmonies
as the bird celebrates its life.

(cont'd)

If I am the bird
the muse is the tree that offers a world
into which poems arrive and echo in the magical air.

When I behold my muse
here or not here
everything is touched by the wand of arising

and the stars which yesterday were so far from me
tonight will be even farther
in worlds so much larger than any poem or song.