



## Sample Poems from *Lost Body*

### *At the End of the Season the Apples*

At the end of the season the apples droop over the lobelia.  
They make room for themselves in my flower boxes.  
It's O.K. with me. The time for pruning and sweeping the yard  
clear of debris is coming. Waiting patiently allows  
the disorder of my life a kind of grace, the natural desire of all things.  
Sometimes late at night I fall asleep on the couch deliberately,  
avoiding the rituals of going to bed: brushing my teeth,  
buttoning my nightgown, clearing the air of arguments  
to make room for two separate lives in the same room,  
to make peace with the darkness we are about to  
trust ourselves to. This is all so much work, and it is late,  
and the sleep I allow to rush over me, completely unprepared,  
is rich and dream-laden and satisfying, as if I had come back  
to my native language.

## *Woman Flapping in the Wind*

She wanted to sit at the window. She wanted the wind to blow in her black hair she had let down. She was an old woman with long black hair and she wanted to ride in the wind in the afternoon. She was an old woman with a daughter, an old woman with a son. She wanted the wind to blow in her black hair in the afternoon, and she pulled up the shade at the window. It made a wild flapping noise like a bat let loose in the bus. Her daughter told her to sit still. Her daughter pulled down the shade and closed the window. Her son moved to the back of the bus and looked away. She was an old woman. It was a hot afternoon and she an old woman in black. She wanted the window, she wanted to ride in the wind in her hair she had let down. Her daughter told her to sit still. She wanted the window open, she pulled up the shade. It made a flapping noise in the wind in her hair, her wild black hair she had let down. An old woman with a daughter who moved to the back of the bus with the son who was looking away. Together they held her. Together they held her still and someone at the front of the bus pulled down the shade and closed the window. Together they kept her still in their arms, her hair flapping in the wind. She wanted the wind. She wanted the window open. It was a hot afternoon and she started flapping wildly like a bat let loose in the bus. Together they held her. She was an old woman, she yelled, her arms making a wild flapping noise like a bat and she an old woman she yelled. She an old woman with long black hair flapping like a bat in the wind in the afternoon. She wanted the wind. She wanted to ride in the wind, her voice yelling and flapping in the wind.

## ***Lost Body***

*after "Anatomy of Love"*

*by Ulalume Gonzales de Leon*

One less

possible day

opening and closing. There

we awaken, about to cross over

into the province of our beloved name.

As if the danger of brandishing this body

belonged to another. We don not know

where our blood is taken,

why our eyelids throb,

whether our hands can translate

what the heart repeats, its remote

cry.

One less possible day repeating

with our arms, our skin, our knees

and the amorous nape of the neck

what it is like to be a body.

To like in wait, opening and closing,

crossing from this body into the only other possible.

We utter our forgotten name to one beloved,

as if to travel into that dangerous heart

were possible. As if it were possible

to be a body. As if we had never forgotten.

## *Today I Didn't*

Today I didn't ring a quiet bell. I didn't turn my head and eyes to look in all directions. I didn't remain alert for at least one hour at a time. I didn't have sustained interest in details. Today I didn't write a letter. I didn't lift my leg. I didn't sing a lullaby. I didn't swat a fly. I didn't remove the dead bee from between the screen and the window. Today I didn't open the window. I didn't brush my hair. I didn't flick ashes for a cigarette. I didn't move when the baby cried. I didn't take any medicine. I didn't listen to the messages on the answering machine. I didn't cry out in my sleep for attention. I didn't light a fire. I didn't talk to the neighbors. I didn't write a book. I didn't suffer humiliation. I didn't notice the difference. I didn't fall headlong from a burning building. I didn't raise and wave my arms in anticipation. I didn't read a newspaper article about people who have stopped traveling to the city. I didn't purchase a compass to shop with. I didn't completely ignore the baby. There, there, Annelisa, don't cry. I didn't record the temperature. I didn't order a new life. I didn't face west when the shadows moved. I didn't have the answer. I didn't move the baby to the other hip. I didn't match the socks. I didn't commit myself to an ideal. I didn't call up my representative. I didn't put out poison for the ants. I didn't remember my dreams. I didn't identify my favorite color. I didn't mistake the green rubber band for a green worm. I didn't discriminate among the faces of adults. I didn't forget the advice of my mother, knowing she exists when not seen. I didn't explore the same activity with each side of my body. I didn't brave one clear moment of desire. I didn't remove the objectionable material. I didn't sense the change of the seasons. I didn't renounce the distance between myself and the world as an illusion. I didn't improve upon the original.