

BEATRIX GATES

Blueprint

—for Jane Cooper

1

A blue-gray triangle

fills the body's chambers

breath across the collarbone quiet down the ribs

flowing flame at the solar plexus.

Breath drawn from the space of air outside the body

penetrating tiniest nerve endings clustered at the fingertips.

Hear it See it

The sun reminds us of our time.

Peaceful curtain, drawing.

Blue-gray inside orange finger flame.

2

A bird knows

how to re-enter the sky

flying from the buildings scaffold of wing.

Is the blue-gray triangle your mind

growing rays from the cool hands of the clock

towards a large still place?

Not supposed to live past the age of five,

you wondered at what you saw:

porpoise signaling from the waves.

Later, your poems tracked the sight lines

of aviators clearing the bomb trail

and from the ground, "the sky . . . streaked with pilots falling."

Blue-gray porpoise, lasting, leaps into the sun.

Your mind skirts the universe starlight from canyon floors

and names far and near as blood and stranger.

No use dying amid your sense

of having to climb infinite ladders and stay standing.

The high cliffs beckon.

The birds.

3

Approaching the city

from the west I see the rising
blue-gray towers, orbs, triangles,
silhouette of mysterious Chrysler
and Empire State buildings.
The river strand shining white
like your hair around your living
lined face.

Cool slices of sky in the river current.

4

Blue-gray, the changing cloudscape
nest of orange sun behind trees

Gray changes to rain freshens the paved road.

And when I ask, you direct me.
I leave the door open a crack
for higher heat—your mind aglow
and three new pencils dreaming beside you.

Looking down, looking around for clues I say little.

“It’s all so incomprehensible,” you reply.

Your eyes, the blue-gray
looking out from the horizon.