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I really have to stop listening to the news

on the radio every twenty minutes they're with this SWAT team busting drug dealers. This one is a mother with a housefull of kids. You can hear the baby crying to be held, the TV blasting commercials, a teenage girl screaming over and over Mommy don't Mommy and the cops bark you just know they got guns drawn and held two handed in front of their crouched chests and the reporter gives a hushed whispery account and then the background: spring the street the ice cream trunk da-da da da-da da da da da

Internal Medicine

I am hoping to read my genes
and find my Native American
grandmothers; they will speak
with you, oh, my African people,
and you, Celt, warrior woman
I saw fly and crack her blue hands
over the frozen crust of the pole
and breathe sweet nectar to all
my children from the cold

Is laughter always about pain?

Sick on a journey-
Over parched fields
Dreams wander on
Basho's death poem 1694

a boy named Nadir
a baby girl named Pinochet
a woman named Vendetta

What is death? How can you help
a patient prepare to die?

Atlantic City 2004

--open the window--
don't you want to see if its dark
or light?

--here, lets pack your suitcase--
maybe you should open
those presents now

--dessert?--
--wine?--
--satin sheets?

(we laugh, delighted,
it isn't our bruise
our cracked wrists
out dementia
our incontinence
our hacking breath)

and Basho?
'Learn about a pine tree from a pine tree,
and about a bamboo stalk from a bamboo stalk.'

May my death be a laughing
poem.

It is September 11th

and I am driving
in a liminal space
I have a homemade map
I follow streetsigns
the setting sun out past
the airport in a place
of blasted tarmac
weed and marsh
flocks take flight
I pass their cries
fill my air I have
written the directions
wrong all I wanted
was the words
I ordered all I needed
was to be on time
the radio is listing danger
my gas gauge
is on empty
I might as well be
driving into the end
the world only thorns
mudflats ancient birds
see me go

I trusted you to care for me

as I heard you'd cared
for your father

to carry me
into the shower

hold me
under its warmth

tuck me in
sing to me

keep me clean
and dry
if I wandered shoeless into the night

to feed me
listen
even if I sang rage

to think it a blessing
to have this time

foolish me

I did not know
how little my little love was worth

how little I'd deserve
its return

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A New Hampshire native, **Kelley White** studied at Dartmouth College and Harvard Medical School and has been a pediatrician in inner-city Philadelphia for more than twenty-five years. Mother of three, White is an active Quaker. Her poems have been widely published over the past decade, in journals including *Exquisite Corpse*, *Nimrod*, *Poet Lore*, *Rattle* and the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and in several chapbook and full-length collections. She is the recipient of a 2008 Pennsylvania Council on the Arts grant in poetry.