

These poems she said

These poems, these poems, *these poems*, she said,
are poems with no love in them.

These are the poems of a man who would leave his wife and child
because they made noise in his study.

These are the poems of a man who would murder his mother
to claim the inheritance.

These are the poems of a man like Plato, she said,
meaning something I did not comprehend but which nevertheless offended me.

These are the poems of a man who would rather sleep with himself
than with women, she said.

These are the poems of a man with eyes like a drawknife, with hands like a pickpocket's hands,
woven of water and logic and hunger, with no strand of love in them.

These poems are as heartless as birdsong, as unmeant as elm leaves, which if they love
love only the wide blue sky and the air and the idea of elm leaves.

Self-love is an ending, she said, and not a beginning.

Love means love of the thing sung, not of the song or the singing.

These poems, she said. . . .

You are, he said, *beautiful*.

That is not love, she said rightly.