

*Eve E. M. Wood*

## **I Cannot**

I cannot promise very much.  
A shell or a finger,  
a pigeon's cheek pressed into the earth.

Across from me two women touch like children in an unlit room.  
I am beginning to think you have died.  
I am beginning to wonder.

I cannot promise very much,  
a single stone dislodged from a house,  
a strip of iron,  
a piece of hair.

I wait for the flower I gave you to break.  
I wait for you to wonder.

I cannot promise anything,  
a wooden wedge,  
a linen cloth,  
a door.

## Lie Still With Me

1.

Lie still with me and watch.  
The ocean is not yet done with itself,  
reformulating mounds of dark sand  
and discarded fish on the shore.  
Your hair molds to your face  
like the skin of the flounder folds over small bones.  
You will not let yourself fall.

2.

Stay still with me and watch.  
Soon I will ask you to swim out and meet me,  
arms deeply linked,  
faces alive to the water  
so no words are needed.

3.

Lie still with me and wait.  
I am a child without a face,  
beguiled by your spirit  
like a stain of blood that will not wash out.  
I have doubled my efforts to lose you  
or love so strongly, I go under,  
forgetting how to breathe.

4.

Together, we own the long day's sea,  
pushing you back up on deck,  
pulling me out like a stone.

5.

Lie still with me and listen.  
I know certain pauses in the waves where the world is silent.  
Bodies are wrinkled, bleached with foam.

6.

Lie still with me and watch.  
I will find you,  
sunk in a carriage of light on the shore.