

In the Rising

When my life runs out
my pores, rises like a field
of corn in summer,
twisting silk, white and blowing,
I will claim pieces of my body—
seed fragments of this flesh
I have grappled with and loved,
fought to save from corruption.
I will not abandon all those
hungry cells to dust.

It has been sweet—the
skin stretched across my ribs,
the feel of hands.
Enough sun engraves a retina,
slowly changes scent of skin.
In all this,
the humiliation of clay has
served, the gift of pain
become a jagged doorway.

These belong to me,
their growing fire embedded
in the flesh, not sieved through
memory but taken in hand,
heavy as shot,

the fistfuls of light and evil
that make a life.

—Nancy Baird