Winter 1993

This Kind of Grace

Pattiann Rogers
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Let's bless the body before love.
By rights we should, every detail.
We could use water, spring water
or rose, minted or bay rum. A touch
to the shoulders—bless these. A drop
behind each knee—sanctify here. A sprinkle
to the belly, yours, mine—in heartfelt
appreciation.

I could dip my fingers into oil cupped
in my palm, sweet citronella, lavender,
clove, trace your forehead, temple
to temple, that warm, assertive
stone—so glorified —perfume the entire
declaration of your spine, neck
to tail—so hallowed.

We'd neglect nothing, ankle, knuckle,
thigh, cheek. And for the rapture
of hair, scented with sweat or the spices
of cedary sages and summer pines,
in which I hide my face—praise
to the conjoining hosts of all
radiant forests and plains.

And imagine how I'd lay my hand,
move my hand carefully on and around
and under each axil and hummock and whorl between your legs, the magnificent maze of those gifts—\textit{thanks to the exploding heavens, thanks to all pulsing suns.}

For these cosmic accomplishments: this delve of your body, a narrow crevasse leading into earth-darkness; this assertion of your hands, light winds lifting, parting, pressing upon supine grasses; this rise, the tip of a swollen moon over black hills; this sweep of union, hawk-shadow falling fast across the open prairie into the horizon; for this whole blessed body, \textit{for what we are about to receive together tonight...truly, ardently, ecstatically, boundlessly grateful.}