17 Year Cicada

I don't know what wakes me.
Why, wingless, I must rise,
Only now, only this

Once, pale and larval
Out of the ground
Into the easy air

The way the sweet sap
Of the root that fed me
All my seventeen years

Rises spring after spring,
Grasses
And the wavering leaf

Reborn.

All around me the soft bodies
Of my sisters and brothers
Harden in the sun.

Their skins fall from them.

They are the thousand husks
The wind clatters
Through the grasses,

And we are flying on new wings,
Sheer, the color of sky,
And now we are the sky,

We darken the sun,
We sing the wind
Its new song,

We shadow the earth,
We fill its stems
With the gifts
Of our eggs,

And then,
We fall.

Kathryn Winograd

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