

HOUSE GUEST

Marlene Wurfel (for Carmen)

She makes martinis
of us
shaken and stirred

She is just plain more. Than anyone else. She is a whole planetary system, has her own wacky orbit, laws of physics, gravitational pull. She is raucous. Arrives like a whole swooping flock. Drops kisses. Drops her bags. Swears, whistles, like a man.

She undoes the kitchen first.

I knew she was coming because the phone rang perpetual
for days
for her

this time it's Chinese medicine green curry this book timbers the size of, the smell of cedar, and Oh God!

the Sun!

I mean, have you guys *seen* the Sun?

Yes, we have noticed. That great burning orb we all revolve around, yes, we've noticed

You.

she blazes like a woman
sleeps
like a girl

When she is gone the refrigerator stops humming. The lettuce the ice the bacon the bag of discounted tofu she bought oozes onto the floor.

We don't wonder what happened, we know. Of course she turned it down. She can't help helping. She likes to fix things.

She's just as handy as any man.

It takes days to get the temperature right again. We (the cozy couple) and our fridge are homeostatic: a process that depends on a relatively stable state of equilibrium to function.

Couldn't she have turned it down just a little? A notch or maybe even two? I mean if her tomatoes froze well that's what crispers are for aren't they and really she shouldn't have put vegetables on the top shelf where the condiments

out of whack

she yanks us like weeds
like fish into air
we topple and clatter
swerve and tumble
ring and rang

do you *know* what you guys need?
do you *know* what you guys should do?
tell me you've at least *heard* of folic acid?
do you *know* what you guys *need* to do?

We think we know the answers to those questions when she's not around.

but she shakes us like champagne uncorks them so rapid-fire and sends the answers spilling over onto the floor

oh she brags
like a boy
oh she weeps
like a woman
laughs like
a whole crowd

is in like a swooping flock and then is just gone

early. no note. no dirty dishes rumped towels or socks left behind.

it's just that even the fridge stops humming

for a while.