THE EXILE SPEAKS

Always I cannot inhabit one place, breathing this air, 
but live with my ear cocked, my face turned west, 
my eye scanning the horizon for the far-off mountains.

My eye scans the horizon for the white-sloped mountains, 
and there is rebuke and refusal in the stiff trees. 
No mountains rise here, spirit gods of a place.

Without mountains rising here, no spirit gods of place, 
I turn to the river. I stroll down alone to the shore 
to cast bread upon the living water by the wet trees.

Casting bread upon the living water where trees bow wet 
means my hand returns empty to its pocket. 
allowing me to separate mine from yours, this from that.

Allow me—I need to separate mine from yours, this and that. 
In my mind, darling, we've been braided together for years 
and not. How much, ever, was I present in your mind?

Not how much, ever, but was I deeply present in your mind. 
the way you lived in mine? Or am I lying now, too. 
trying to invent something we never had—a life, a love.

I'm trying to invent something we never had, a solid love 
braided together. I'll take what lies here, my hand 
resting in its warm pocket. And bread dissolving in water.