

Gratitude Workshop,  
Notebook #12, 1991  
*for Lucie Brock-Broido*

She said, *Poetry is about demons*  
and *to trust the interior of ice.*

I ruminate over all the advice  
we must endure in this world,

a precarious stack of dishes  
at the edge of the sink

or a game of midnight freeze tag  
in a field of no moon.

She said, *Don't apologize. Don't explain.*  
If fourteen fish swim past

what does the fifteenth look like?  
The darkest hour of the recurring bruise.

She said, *Court tension*  
and *risk.* They don't exchange

names. They don't even shake  
greasy hands. About doubt?

It's terminal, more than a blessing.  
Forgiveness is another night of testimony.

How is it you remain unmarried?  
I told myself it was the mattress.

I had a bed. I did not lie.  
I find fire delectable and can sleep.

She said, *Be careful not to be*  
*too good,* so I pretend

to fidget with some anger.  
In simplicity, the simple.

Let the day bear out  
its breakdown of horoscopes

like coins that disappear  
into the glass face of a parking meter.

*All description must be revelation.*  
I can forgive only the first gray hair.

And in response to my longing,  
I burn the toast.

—Sandra Yannone