

Because We Spill Not only Milk - Nancy Schaeffer

Because we spill not only milk
Knocking it over with an elbow
When we reach to wipe a small face
But also spill seed on soil we thought was fertile but isn't,
And also spill whole lives, and only later see in fading light
How much is gone and we hadn't intended it
Because we tear not only cloth
Thinking to find a true edge and instead making only a hole
But also tear friendships when we grow
And whole mountainsides because we are so many
And we want to live right where black oaks lived,
Once very quietly and still
Because we forget not only what we are doing in the kitchen
And have to go back to the room we were in before,
Remember why it was we left
But also forget entire lexicons of joy
And how we lost ourselves for hours
Yet all that time were clearly found and held
And also forget the hungry not at our table
Because we weep not only at jade plants caught in freeze
And precious papers left in rain
But also at legs that no longer walk
Or never did, although from the outside they look like most others
And also weep at words said once as though
They might be rearranged but which
Once loose, refuse to return and we are helpless
Because we are imperfect and love so
Deeply we will never have enough days,
We need the gift of starting over, beginning
Again: just this constant good, this
Saving hope.