

ODE TO A BEGONIA

1.

Look what you've done with a pot of dirt
and a cup of water, once a week.
You splay your sun-stealing leaves
across the air, and shower down young
like pyrotechnic debris. Now, in May,
just when I thought you'd done it all,
you erupt in short, crisp spurts
of tiny waxen bells.

2.

What is a begonia's sorrow?
Must you mist your tears
into the air, and lean your leaves
upon the shoulders of the day?

3.

I've abused your resiliency, begonia;
it's way past your repotting time.
Lumps of rimey soil chink your roots.
Your leaves crimp then flare
with slugs of moisture
that sink directly to the saucer.
Loosened, you slip from the pot
like a plug. In my palm, the handling
sets roots alose. When they tremble,
and the leaves float freely in the air,
a quick perception holds me:
How direct and simple your existence!
Light settles through you like breath.
Spongelike, you sop it from between
the molecules of air. And from the earth,
you draw a mineral talc of nutrients.
You parlay in impossible delicacies.
The sharp, prescient scintillants
you scatter neurally
through a bee's being! One touch,
and she knows you wholly,
while our relating is so limited.
There: new pot and soil.
While I lumber upon you,
and ruffle your leaves,
am I not more than a blunt bulk
that briefly cuts your light?