june 30 Birds of Necessity or Joy but probably both:

(for Mr. Mike and Mrs. Eleanor)

We hung our laundry—and theirs—in Mrs. Eleanor’s yard.

I, surely barefoot on the grass and concrete

and maybe shirtless too,

a wild girl of summer,

would slip between the sheets and under pillow cases,

dampness ever decreasing,

freshness ever increasing.

When the wind blew,

you could run under the sheets too.

Inside Mrs. Eleanor’s yard were Mr. Mike’s cucumbers
growing on the fence.

If they fruited into our yard we could pick them,

but fruits on either side were passed over the fence anyway

depending on who needed what,

who was cooking,

where we were eating.

Inside Mrs. Eleanor’s yard was Mr. Mike’s garage

a dark and magical structure

where we kept our bikes

and findings from the alley became gifts:

a pogo stick,
two scooters

—one red and one blue, I think, both repaired for use on the front sidewalk—
bicycles,
a rotund blue vinyl chair became a go-cart seat,
tent poles fitted with a notched coffee can became the pear picker
for the tree in our yard
one on top of the other
higher
and higher
until, quivering,
the prize was cut at the stem with the notch in the can
then lowered
one tent pole at a time
and paper grocery bags full of pears
were passed over the fence.
Do gulls and terns
slice the air and skim the water
because they must
or because they can?
Does the oriole
wear that fabulous orange shirt
because that’s the only one he has?
Would it be any less fabulous?

july 18: night hawk in a hot still night
july 30:  her name is Little Bird

august 5 ghetto birds (wazo sovage d'ghetto):
the sound is rolling stones, beatles, and motown—
all in french on the radio just a mile and a river away from canada.
the scene is a narrow street
parked full on both sides and a woman with a cigarette
and a pink shower cap
who pulls out and doesn’t budge.
i am late
and thirty-five, not twenty-four,
so i roll my eyes and the car back into the intersection and change my course
away from the chene park concert now mixing through the open car windows
with tiiiii-i-iii-iiiiime is on my side in french.
birds always catch my eye,
so i swing my head to my upper left peripheral vision to see a gull gliding over
with a sausage in its bill.

august 8:  hawks are not color blind; cardinals are just macho

august 11:  goldfinches on thistle:  a delicate affair

august 17:  The ovenbird stays all summer.

september 1:  our geese like our people cross the street slowly

september 5:
silent formation

of cormorants slips behind

fog over river