**Heaven**

O who will show me those delights on high?
                            *Echo.         I.*
Thou Echo, thou art mortall, all men know.
                            *Echo.         No.*
Wert thou not born among the trees and leaves?
                            *Echo.         Leaves.*
And are there any leaves, that still abide?
                            *Echo.         Bide.*
What leaves are they? impart the matter wholly.
                            *Echo.         Holy.*
Are holy leaves the Echo then of blisse?
                            *Echo.         Yes.*
Then tell me, what is that supreme delight?
                            *Echo.         Light.*
Light to the minde: what shall the will enjoy?
                            *Echo.         Joy.*
But are there cares and businesse with the pleasure?
                            *Echo.         Leisure.*
Light, joy, and leisure; but shall they persever?
                            *Echo.         Ever.*

 —George Herbert

**‘Yes! full surely ’twas the Echo’**

Yes! full surely ’twas the Echo,

Solitary, clear, profound,

Answering to Thee, shouting Cuckoo,

Giving to thee Sound for Sound!

Whence the Voice? from air or earth?

This the Cuckoo cannot tell;

But a startling sound had birth,

As the Bird must know full well;

Like the voice through earth and sky

By the restless Cuckoo sent;

Like her ordinary cry,

Like—but oh, how different!

Hears not also mortal Life?

Hear not we, unthinking Creatures!

Slaves of Folly, Love, or Strife—

Voices of two different Natures?

Have not We too? Yes we have

Answers, and we know not whence;

Echoes from beyond the grave,

Recogniz’d intelligence?

Such within ourselves we hear

Oft-times, ours though sent from far;

Listen, ponder, hold them dear;

For of God, of God they are!

 —William Wordsworth

 **Late Echo**

Alone with our madness and favorite flower

We see that there really is nothing left to write about.

Or rather, it is necessary to write about the same old things

In the same way, repeating the same things over and over

For love to continue and be gradually different.

Beehives and ants have to be re-examined eternally

And the color of the day put in

Hundreds of times and varied from summer to winter

For it to get slowed down to the pace of an authentic

Saraband and huddle there, alive and resting.

Only then can the chronic inattention

Of our lives drape itself around us, conciliatory

And with one eye on those long tan plush shadows

That speak so deeply into our unprepared knowledge

Of ourselves, the talking engines of our day.

 —John Ashbery

 **Echoes**

1.
Once I could imagine my soul
I could imagine my death.
When I imagined my death
my soul died. This
I remember clearly.

My body persisted.
Not thrived, but persisted.
Why I do not know.

2.
When I was still very young
my parents moved to a small valley
surrounded by mountains
in what was called the lake country.
From our kitchen garden
you could see the mountains,
snow covered, even in summer.

I remember peace of a kind
I never knew again.

Somewhat later, I took it upon myself
to become an artist,
to give voice to these impressions.

3.
The rest I have told you already.
A few years of fluency, and then
the long silence, like the silence in the valley
before the mountains send back
your own voice changed to the voice of nature.

This silence is my companion now.
I ask: *of what did my soul die?*
and the silence answers

*if your soul died, whose lif*e
*are you living and
when did you become that person?*

 —Louise Glück

 **Cave**

I took my boy to hear an echo.

He wanted to hear one. I wanted him to.

We wended through a half-formed unintelligible

brushy wood to a place I knew called “cave.”

It had openings at both ends

and could be seen through, not into.

Nor was it a tunnel, strictly, though it passed

through the ground, though it went somewhere.

It was like stepping into a telescope

unseen, into the dark distorted center.

The walls were arched and laid with glazed tiles,

orange, aqua, muddy green and so

streaked with nervous lines where water had run down,

where water must have trellised down still.

It was not clean. It smelled of piss.

Chicken bones, empties, old rubbers, mold.

Echo, I called. So did my boy.

But his voice was small—birdscratch—it

got all lost inside the echo my voice made;

pale echo, barely one.

 That was when I had a boy.

 I’m quite sure I did.

 I wanted one, back then, when I had something to offer,

when I wasn’t in this place, where light passes through me,

 when I wasn’t like this,

which is what,

when I wanted one,

as he, poor boy, wanted me.

 —Mark Levine