

RYAN VAN WINKLE

Challenger (1986)

Do not speak to me of space.
Speak to me of pond and frog,
the sun-grown plants, not
the thieving moon above.

Speak to me of pond and frog.
Won't lie out on a fleece blanket.
I'd stink-eye the thieving moon but
I will not look up

so do not call the sky a holy blanket
or wash my clothes under wincing stars.
I will not look up,
find clouds like rings of smoke. Love,

you washed our clothes under winking stars,
and you scattered like a dandelion clock
into rings of smoking clouds. Love,
I keep my eyes on the roots and willows,

I blow your kisses at dandelion clocks,
and can't stand to catch a leaf falling, so
keep my eyes low - on the roots and willows,
the fleshy sod, the stream I know is steady.

I can't stand to catch a leaf falling,
or to feel the sun fatten young plants.
I stare at sod and the stream I know is steady
won't speak to me of space.