

# **ROSMARIE WALDROP**

**DOING**

I often don't know what to do. Or if I want to.

Dawn has long broken while I still drag my feet in the mud inside my head, hope for coffee, make a B-flat moan. To prepare the plunge into action. Or not.

Maybe I want to cast only a passing shadow. Feel like my mother's "Thank God" when she took off her corset.

But I am worried there's something I ought to be doing. Afraid I'll die without having done anything. "Realized" myself, you call it, but wouldn't that just mean limited myself? A cement mixer stuck in one motion, even if it helps build a house?

So I delude myself into thinking I'm doing something when thinking. Or when descending into the night with the cat and dreams of the cat.

You say, no doing without sweat of the face, thorns and thistles, and bringing forth children.

Should I look, instead of worrying about fine distinctions that escape my eyes? Listen, instead of fretting about the size of my ears? But can I cultivate my garden without becoming a cabbage head?

The hand gets ready to write. Could we not call this manual labor? Or a stage in the Great Work of rendering the corporeal cat incorporeal while giving her body to the bodiless word? Even if it's from despairing of my own body?

You say, my writing is so slow it's more like gravitational condensation. Or dust gathering on the cleaning supplies.

It's true I'm dawdling as if I had time to watch the formation of geological layers. Though night already seeps through my brittle bones.

I certainly don't know what to do to end my days "gracefully." But the body dies all through our life, thousands of cells every second.

So everything should be very clear.