

Sally Rosen Kindred

THE NEXT DAY

Let's pretend the last time I felt safe
was just last week, that it felt
like moonlight in my skin. Let's pretend
the next day I went back
into the woods and found a bonnet, a doll
and spiders still moving in the trees.
Let's say the longleaf pines didn't die,
the fraser fir withstood threats
of hands and threats of air,
and so the Weller's salamander
and the rock gnome lichen made
a home there, the spruce fir moss
spider could bend its legs
like women bending at the waist
to touch in thanks the grass
hems of God. Let's pretend I don't
need a glass of wine. I don't need
a wet throat to say I believe
my sons will walk to the store
and home through the woods
and our warped door. That nothing here
belongs in the brute moonless dark
of a box made from fir or pine.
Let's pretend the last time I felt safe
was yesterday, was soon. Let's say
we can put all our dark
in a box. And a box is not
always elegy: that the lid will bend

easily, like spider legs, like the legs
of a galaxy in the black
antler-velvet night, and let's pretend
I made the darkness up –
because after all, it was made. No, let's thank
the Maker. Say tomorrow it got cool
and the next day, cooler. Let's say we all survive.