

Advanced Praise for *jupiter fell* *out the sky last night*

“Giovanna Lomanto has a vanguard imagination with poems like a pianist racing to the climax of an era. A loving care for language and political economy make for Lomanto’s exciting, singular writing that is like coming to the carnival and watching a performer juggle gravity fields. Lomanto is truly a confidant of the cosmos bringing so much insight to bear in a moment like a master painter able to reveal through their subjects the play and contradictions of competing winds.”

—Tongo Eisen-Martin, San Francisco Poet Laureate
& award-winning author of *Heaven Is All Goodbyes*

“Giovanna Lomanto’s pieces capture complex emotions while also showcasing a precise use of poetic device, particularly metaphor. Her poems invite readers to harness the velocity of their feelings while also keeping them safe within the boundaries of form. This is what makes her work so beautiful and her potential vast.”

—Maddy Clifford, MFA, contributor to KQED & 48 Hills

**jupiter
fell out the sky
last night**

Advanced Reader's Edition | On Sale July 2021

Also by Giovanna Lomanto
no body in particular

jupiter fell out the sky last night

GIOVANNA LOMANTO



jupiter fell out the sky last night

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for the stardust in our bones

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foreword

Spores for Jupiter

Writing spores writing: your words become my seeds. Poetry lives between us, in what I make of what I experience and imagine in relationship to what you made of what you experienced and imagined in relationship to what was experienced and imagined. And so on. Here are a few spores to seed.

- * Write an extrication from invisibility.
- * Write the measure of the way the day shines on your skin.
- * Write into the space between thingness and somethingness and nothingness.
- * Write the sound of jupiter, the sound of falling, the sound of sky, the sound of night. Write into the space jupiter leaves behind.
- * Write the footnote to the footnote.
- * Write the architecture of the diorama whose lamplight shines a shaft of dissonance.

* Write the rub between stutter and shiver.

* Write the solace found in the superimposed.

* What holds in the space between inhale and exhale?

Written by Eleana Jen Hofer with love for *jupiter fell out
the sky last night* by Giovanna Lomanto

i.

i remember ballet class

away from the highway's curvature, the loops and bends
of a manifestation—

how do we dance?

slowly, on the bridge meant only for walking?

with a raucous abandon, dream of

a quick two-step,

a feisty foxtrot

yet,

for some reason foreign to the oxygen pumping to my
brain

little voices whisper that

we were meant to live in this suspension,

a car-free carefree frolic

★

dance with bare feet,

nothing between blood and ground beneath besides the
flat expanse of a skin stretched between each bone

such a naked pleasure,

incredibly inviting, entirely exciting

about a picturesque pirouette,

framed by the image of an imaginary waterfall coursing
behind you

or is it me?

regardless of the perpetrator,

this criminal act of self-indulgence is figurative

★★

in truth, i am sitting in my bed
am only dreaming of expansive eternities and images of
being one with nature when,
in reality, the very paper printed violates a mother and
every keystroke clicked cries a child

cannot be carefree in this extreme, because in part
and not despite
a reality that shakes a dream,
a simple visualization exercise floats across every idiosyn-
cratic iteration of idealization.
cannot express how ardently i love the fantasy,
how many hours spent in the deep recesses of dancing
with my two left feet, clubbed and clowned
by a disappointing lack of coordination

entertain ideas of my grace, there is something almost
nonchalant
about the with rectified unreality, because
if every inch were simply that, then i would be miles or
kilometers or lightyears away

so why does the specificity of the dream dance catch my
mind's fancy? i ask and you ask and together
collectively
we ask

in a strict act of singularity,
answer

answer with something that mimics the mimetic,
i simply repeat your (our?) query, but with a . at the end
rather than a ? why does the specificity of the dream
dance catch my mind's fancy FULL STOP

we speak in circles, and as we speak, my feet float

suspended in the air between our breaths,
i waltz

there is a freedom i have yet to find

don't quite know what i am when do i ever know what
 here again
can't find out just where two diverged in the branches of a
tree rooted in a soil stuffed with
uncertainty
there's a forest
 between & it sprouted
from the seeds sowed. tree doesn't flower or blossom it
just grows & cannot track its age without
chopping it down so that's what took a chainsaw
to the forest between and the entire apparatus fell to pieces
& i was left just with
 you.
look at me different now
& after everything still don't quite know what

fabula and syuzhet

.

I

i cannot be entirely certain of where we stand
we are
history

II

we have not spoken for two weeks

III

hello
can i sit here?

IV

everything is dark
in your room
except for the moonlight
streaming asylum

V

you
barely know
you
open lips
skyrocket

VI

we talk for
two hours
just us in past lives

VII

i cannot see anything past the
brown of your eyes,
the curve of your parted lips

VIII

physicality is not a marker of beauty
i remind myself,
reimaging and reconsidering what constitutes
a flaw

IX

you are an addiction i must break

X

your hands are so
unlike

XI

i am convinced of the same ecstasy
and you leave
without so much as a goodbye

XII

i cannot be entirely certain of where we stand
we are nothing
except our own
history

the feeling of rain on skin

exhilarating, the rush of
water droplets every
where but here
here
on the tips of my finger
and in the crown of my head
and all at once,
the air around me m
aterializ
es
and
the world arrangesre itself.
nothing is the sam
e
and i am
entirely open
to the idea of
dancing with watching eyes;
oblivion
opens for me
for me
for m
e

somethingness **(a poem with borrowed parts)**

i.

to want, to lack, to need, to sing with the soft sparrow of
solitude and the absence of somethingness /
and we ache for the somethingness, the immense 'collec-
tion of commodities'¹—
the unadulterated earth-shattering motion of
all that we cannot hold in the dips of our palms, some-
thingness so
intangibly whole that it fills every capacity of our fancies,
swallows the meat of desire²
with the bitter pill of a want that speaks a somethingness
into existence / just as

In this edition, numbered footnotes are Marx's or the translator's, the latter of which will be marked with an additional asterisk. Footnotes are taken from Chapter 1: The Commodity, Part I: The Two Factors of the Commodity: Use-Value and Value (Substance of Value, Magnitude of Value)

1. Karl Marx, *Zur Kritik der Politischen Okonomie*, Berlin, 1859, p.3 (English translation p.27).

2. 'Desire implies want; it is the appetite of the mind, and as natural as hunger to the body...The greatest number (of things) have their value from supplying the wants of the mind' (Nicholas Barbon, *A Discourse on Coining the New Money Lighter*. In *Answer to Mr Locke's Considerations etc.*, London, 1696, pp. 2,3).

the indented marginalia imply a strict adherence to form,
the reality is much more arguable, much less stoically stol-
id and steadfast /
there's a hissing sound, the sharp cut of the letter s snaking
its way into the
synapses of spectacular smatterings of shame, with the
shushing shifting the idea of something being
relevant, but only tangentially virtuous,
only in terms of polarization and the magnetization running
rampant³

we speak of somethingness in tumultuous terms, words that
are entirely
at the mercy of their worthy masters,⁴ not the creators who re-
leased the word into the world,
who differentiated the antecedent through the insertion of a
single letter,

3 'Things have an intrinsick vertue' (this is Barbon's special term for use-value) 'which in all places have the same vertue; as the loadstone to attract iron. The magnet's property of attracting iron only became useful once it had led to the discovery of magnetic polarity.'

4 'The natural worth of anything consists in its fitness to supply the necessities, or serve the conveniences of human life' (John Locke, 'Some Considerations on the Consequences of the Lowering of Interest' (1691) in *Works*, London, 1777, Vol. 2, p.28). In English writers of the seventeenth century, we still often find the word 'worth' used for use-value and 'value' for exchange value. This is quite in accordance with the spirit of a language that likes to use a Teutonic word for the actual thing, and a Romance word for its reflection.

a catalogue⁵ of the elements that incorporate themselves
into our existence,
challenging and changing and charging and chastising us
for our wanton ways, how we waste away into the wander-
ing abyss of
somethingness, wherein somethingness
is the material of pilling and piling is a product to be plun-
dered,
and nothing is as precious as it is when it's about to be sto-
len.⁶ when taken into the custody of a
rainy afternoon, the sun a robber of the misty air—how
can you measure the way the
day shines on your skin?

5 In bourgeois society the legal fiction prevails that each person, as a buyer, has an encyclopedic knowledge of commodities.

6 'Value consists in the exchange relation between one thing and another, between a given amount of one product and a given amount of another.'

**a reality in which i'm a kooky old lady
who makes too much sense**

set into the bones
(somewhere between blood and marrow)
watch the body burn

hot like metal hammock struts in the afternoon sun

you wished you held it, didn't you?

she says

warm roof furniture
on your skin sang the high
harmony when you
heard the string shriek in a minor

she says

hold it

she says

tight and close
swaddle like newborn
moment melts ice
in the palms so
clutch it to your chest

she says

off kilter,
ask about direction
and she rejects
a hand to hold

she says

jupiter fell out the sky last night

when you ask
her what that means
she looks up, smiles,
shuts her eyes hair

smells like earl grey tea (some
things never change), tongue tastes like
trader joe's green
tea mints

chuckle in the same, cackle in
the different, nod in the
evening, shrug in the night

she says

no like it's biting into a jawbreaker,
hurts your teeth a little but, God—sweet
in the summertime or stale in the winter

she says

everything in the light
never looked that way again

she says

every poet writes about the moon

in the bedroom, bulan is a nightlight
sing me a soft sort of sound
somewhere between a
hum and a whistle. falling into

the afternoon mata hari
bulan is a nap rustling like
perfumed flowerbeds and palm trees

(in the unlikely case i've been
gifted with divination, memory
plays the piano in staccato with no
pedal, no sustain)

the symphony of crickets in
the hillside dusk,
we've walked up these slopes still, bulan is

the sole thing that would build a
statue for, a scaled down version
of the milky orb
in the pacific ocean

bulan is the same word for month
bulan is the accompaniment to bintang
bulan is coffee in the morning, tea in the night
bulan is hum/whistle

if you listen, you can hear the sound of a tree falling

do you think they see me?

do you think they see me?

do you think they see me?

do you think they see me?

do you think they see me?

do you think they see me?

do you think they see me?

do you think they see me?

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do you think they see me?

do you think they see me?

do you think they see me?

do you think they see me?

do you think they see me?

**the void looks imperial (i'm not sure
how, but it just does)**

shriek in the night
soft touch of a down pillow
bodied and belated, sink into the
endless, the
light glints off your skin

never had a sunburn, never walked
and whispered along to the catchiest song on
the radio waves' sweet taste of

blueberry lemon scone and tucked hair
listen to the reverberations with the
metallic part in the back of our throats,
chant with the berkeley city council in the
strange echo of a voice shouting into the empty street

to traverse in b flat and tell ourselves it rings

body body body

three times to make it sentient
gift from zeus himself body body body
way that you move when you sleep

tried on many warm things in the summertime
(wind bites the bones, as you know)
fit into the skirt i owned four years ago

body body body thick and sturdy in november
running into rosemary in front of the dining hall
no one notices when you have a different body body

body drank one glass of wine, got scared, went home with
tipsy boys who lived on the floor below me, took my
body body body and walked up the last staircase on my
own

wrote a letter to my emak and engkong and cried when i
read it back later—never checked the one i had written
i the park that one day when they took me

somewhere in between a chipmunk and a towhee
anything with a small body body body i wouldn't say
but everyone knew that the jokes about heifers were nixed

found a jukebox at rick's and sang along to tunes
never heard hit the airwaves and

once i left i went and i
danced on the roof without any eyes
moved with my body body body

dark of september, light of april

think about how
recoil is
something in
between the soft and
the stolid jolts with
the spring in the spine
curve inwards
and find that
we singe holes in
the fronts of our
shirts there was a

curly vibrato, straight sustain,
nights in the middle of
the fall walking
from my place to his
with an extra coat in
my hand, ignore an
extraneous budget

spendthrift—buy things
cheap but buy lots of them—
that's what spendthrift means, right?

got a mountain for a
molehill (even exchange,

as i'm sure the mole
will tell you) and stood in the
stairwell crying about
something vaguely vericose

veins in the arms, blood
on the legs, scar on the face
can only ever write
about one experience:
the time that i fainted in
front of the bus stop, man stared
woman came to me

kids in the suburbs always
have that sort of shirt,
change it in the wintertime sun

lungs

some sort of rattling in the chest
 (maybe it's a heartbeat)
woodpecker chirps and pounding more definitely than
dastardly
maybe it's like that time in bali

crickets
crescendo until the quiet of the dawn
i wait three years
for the breath
catch in my ribs, jerk
the illicit hit
breathing module
somewhere in my torso

glitter
brushed on my eyelids
my housemates ask
if i'm going out

i haven't

gone out for five months
and the only memory
i have is going to kip's
retch

a little as my boyfriend holds my hair
from my face
the burning in my throat
is vile but the way blood rushing through

my temples an unrivaled
sensation that looks much better in movies, still
tangible and tentative at the same time

i went to bed
woke up
found a snake hissing,
wrapped around my lungs

featuring a dark night riddled with truth

never really made sense in the
aristotilian definition
(maybe it's freudian, maybe
it's a totally different phenomenon)

addicted to the overage
spliced and spilled red
wine stains white sheets in
the middle of the night when
i laugh enough to
tip my glass saying
underground then
hopped on a new york taxi and i
wasn't wrong, was i?
the driver turned around
and asked if that
was where i was headed

didn't know how to
answer, couldn't
think first loves are
anything but the only thing he

left me on that park bench in rocklin

remember that one time
you handed me a star?

flashing moments on the red couch,
all the sad songs i listened to
floor hard like voice on phone
call withered and wilting, watching
waiting for a whisper of
goodbye in the gap between my
fingers could've sworn
i said no to everyone
else for the next
year hoping you would
magically disappear
from that
tucked away corner with the
red wine stain

didn't know how to answer, couldn't
think that first loves are anything but (the only)

ii.

parents don't read dissertation papers

call me lazarus

prophetic, mimetic,
watermark on the bottom right
 scrawling the word
 GOD onto the page

closed my eyes in the middle
of the concert and
came out the wall of

death
resurrected

with a beer in
hand (amber ale, courtesy
of the bartender)

when the corners of lips
curl up into a smile in fetal
position on crooked teeth,
 to think about all the
colors
of the dresses worn,
let the moment boil and
rebirth itself as a gas,
romp with the smoke when
you throw water onto a flame

what's your sign

wonder about who you've kissed in the meantime—do you ever think about my glossed lips in the spring / still think about how you knocked on the door downstairs instead of texting me saying that you were here / housemate let you in and you stood in the foyer as i walked in with my long black dress / didn't talk about it half the night and instead talked about the time i spent seven weeks in the hospital / miss the way your voice sounded / hardly remember it now something about sitting on that bed fairy lights on in the background makes me think of how i wanted you to wish me a happy birthday / fell in love in the most clichéd sense of the word: bent and brittle / smooth and steady wild and willfull you told me you failed your math class / to be truthful: i only remember the barista telling me you should pay / you listened, so thought i was yours (isn't that what a credit card swipe means?)

don't hold your breath for some great realization

always been a past girl
fleeting bleeding
streetlight glow in the nighttime air
wheat and straw and

all those stringy grass
plants swaying in the midday wind
watch them dance
in the soft whisper of the word now
i swore the most best worst

let the morning drive
me to the shoulder of the highway
spent so many hours in that room and when
left i forgot, washed
away with sharpied poems on the wall

bet you didn't think you'd still be floating around
but every once in a while
reminiscent screams of your name find
with a handful of curses
and a bucket of mourning
in the hallway breeze

wait for you to find me at a reunion,
tap on my shoulder,
tell me something, anything

2am and i'm still writing

check the endnotes and find the
everlasting in the header

listen to an absurd amount of acoustic indie pop
and only ever felt alive in the slow songs

we found a trajectory and ran for it
hit my toe on the doorframe and went to the hospital

dusted the handprints on the concrete from when we
were kids
pressed my palms to measure the fingers

and about that one halloween, when i walked in
found you staring at me from the back end of the hall

somethingness

ii.

we measure it in quarters. we think about the things that
we will bring¹ /
we return it in the quarters we get from the bank when we
give the teller
a ten-dollar bill that comes back in the form of laundry
we can throw in the dryer, watch your clothes tumble
over and around each other as the machine spins,
on and on, and we can see that there is somethingness in
the warmth that
materializes when we take them out from the throws of a
throw we wrap ourselves inside.
to hold it, to know it, is to want more. it is to want

touch is the most evocative sense—feeling is even rooted
in it, through its multiplicity,
but in the case of the physicalizing this worth (or, as
aforementioned, exchange value)
we find the image is a teller of impotence, the erschei-
nungsform^{2*}

1. Nothing can have an intrinsic value' (N. Barbon, op.cit., p.6); or
as Butler says

'The value of a thing
Is just as much as it will bring.'

2. As noted by the translator: The form of appearance. The word
appears in inverted commas in the original.

can trick the mind into thinking that it is the heart, that
the image of more
is somehow necessary for a life force that exudes a wealth,
an opulence dripping
with the accumulation of surplus, a somethingness writ-
ten with capital letters / when
reading in braille, the sentence sends a shiver down the
spine, as if each
individually raised bauble was a tendril of electricity
transmitting itself into the body

miraculously we find ourselves in an obsessive sort of
roundabout
in which we cannot differentiate the proper and the prod-
uct from the improper and the absence /
eventually, we stop trying, and we instead think about the
malleability,
how the money becomes primed after it has been a com-
modity, how we see that
that is the final destination: more of this somethingness,
more materiality
regardless of how we define it, and
the somethingness has swallowed our beings and has
made us subject to want /
it is to want

and yet, we are picky. shoplifters with taste, only taking
the best from the better,
in a clear robbery of equivalents—at least, that's what i

think the salesman said when he
sold me granite countertops / but later, i realized i only
loved granite because of the way
i could see the obsidian sparkle through the marbled tops,
not because it had any
mysticism, no miraculous ability to multiply every mate-
rial it met / barbon said:
'one sort of wares are as good as another, if the value be
equal.
there is no difference or distinction in things of equal
value...
one hundred pounds worth of lead or iron, is of as great a
value
as one hundred pounds worth of silver and gold'⁹ maybe
it's heavy,
the weight of one hundred pounds. iron or gold³, silver or
lead, the weight is one hundred pounds

3. N. Barbon, op. cit., pp. 53 and 7

spent so long trying to be avant-garde

radio sang me to sleep with 103.9 the fish
wrote
atrocious
a stage left shame
cracked
showing it to the no's
waited and found the filament, insert
joke about not knowing the function of a filament,
rise in the morning and
rest through the night—tempting

way i crawl out of bed and sit in front of closed
eyes and feel the top of my forehead sinking down
while my temples sway in the summer shakes,
when does the rise of the rapport
overtake the sweet calling of a namesake

nothing seems to mean anything
anymore (i could've sworn i loved him) but
parted lips whisper
damn

careening in my direction

wait for the leash to break

watched myself shrink in the mirror (check the
notches on the doorframe for proof), but only when you speak in
indonesian, otherwise in english, i'm invincible

sour sort of taste in the back of my nose, you know,
like when you get water stuck from a backflip below sea level

you smelled like aftershave all day
saw the stubble
on your chin
and when carved

out, looked me in the eye and said you
would never love to hold me,
all the nights drinking IPA's by the pool table
forget the gradation in the ephemeral

listened to tame impala flood the airwaves
and tore onto the next sunrise

stood me up and honestly i'm okay with it

remember the time we both
ditched the big rally during orientation
(ha) spent the night
talking in my bottom bunk—
top bunk came back and
asked me (about you)
took a knife and scratched
your name into the bedpost, an

egalitarian enterprise you saw that
you could put your
hand across my shoulders but you
didn't, just sat at the other side of the bed
and dared me to (*cross, cross,*
cross) followed by (*crush,*

crush, crush) i admit you slipped
into peripheral view and yet when your focus met mine

hills run up and down in the same
way that we jaunt across northside
walked with you, giggled

man of the earth

fantasize my familiar, standing with a cold beer in my palms
and feeling too pressed

 against the wall why do we think
we can

voice deep, resounding, mine shrill and sharp over the din
move together from corner to corner, and eventually you
sit in the shame chair with
no context, so we laugh at nothing and smile at everything:
night so blanketed with a glass sitting next to you,

turn

wake the next morning it's still us walk around as if you're the
man lost on the bus

we go to romeo's for coffee

 when i tell you

 i'll pay, you insist

 the man at the register winks at me

walking felt like an ending

when we finally stopped

smile so faint it was impressionistic

that's the thing about performance art

quiet noise a chick makes when it be- comes a hen

instinct to type gibberish deep in the
margins

the time slows down during the sunset
girl cries on stage with a bouquet of flowers

hometown in some californian suburb,
run in the bandung rain and laugh when the
thunder strikes the tree in the distance
tamarind candy bowled in the pantry

(kept the gooey center)
listened to some sad bon iver song
got the feeling that expedited

submissions are the only way to make money
play it as long as it doesn't give me the spins

high on the acidity sour taste of the melt
in the back with teeth lodged on taste buds
swallowed my cavity,

fill it to the brim inhale

trouble falling asleep at night, great at napping in the day

great, looks like i'm
spending four more hours writing

21st century nonsensical poetry
way off in the third album
(you're only listening to the first)
they sound nothing like almond eyes

the dimpled smile is
underrated anyway, especially once it's been on the stove
too long
when opened the last cookbook you spent your
absurdly loud pocket change

remember taking the bus down telegraph? nights under a
shadowed sky, taking extra stops on accident ending
up at laney college on a tuesday night

visited mz. t and she made me blackberry tea, visiting ap-
prentice to the
letterpress in the hallway says i'm not used, says

sun too bright in the morning
fractals and floaters to break the nightmare

night man broke into my room and said
he was looking for the kids' room, so i sat up in
bed and didn't breathe for forty seconds

high out of the tallest heavens,
pirouette in some butchered form of bachata
laugh until we forget

cried for twenty minutes yesterday

stutter in the crack of a voice—don't
tell me you don't know what i'm talking
about—shiver and wait for the

sweet noise of the knotted nubs
tree branches rubbing

**the fortuneteller says something that
seems to be true**

heartline deep into the palm
(find the length, too—the length, too!)

origin stories never really end if you think about straggling
teeth and impending denture fittings
and when you find the baby then you hold it tight, swad-
dle the child in the sweetest red

lyrics speak about when the lifeline
started
somewhere in the shallow recesses of the knifed
gash in the gory
light of a bloodlust

(you know, that one time the folk
singer danced in the smoky sunset)

know little else besides
the greatest moment was that of

preludes in the nighttime, symphonies at dawn

so the way
we find our lines is by breaking them, said the actor in the
details

call in the orchestra
they'll be the backing music (*ensemble, as
we like to call it*)
and let them read the cards, the sheet
music, the poems, everything

heartline deep into the palm, you can just as easily find
flight in the greater sense at the time of birth, so we idle,
watch and
take notes for next time

iii.

when they redid the carpet in the house

stars in the glow
of the lamplight
sway to the
sound of the
tango in the
hallway where
we can listen
to the footsteps
somewhere
in the thick of it
we find the end
of the sentence—poem
keeps going, but
somehow we
sputter, pause
when they ask us
why we dance on
our tiptoes
responding : why
would we do anything else?

it's in the constellations
they describe the
aftermath (wreckage
in december, bloom
in august). four step in
my body sounds like a
parrot in the hardwood,

cut from the gash
of something written
in the panels.
when the construction
rolls in, the impact steadies.

pedagogy

I

sound of a gasp, soft rumble of applause,
whispers set deep into another's palms.
dance in the morning, sleep in the night, and when
we wake, move to the beautiful dreams from the evening
and
displace them into the cusp of two countries—here,
there—
touch the in between

II

come from a long line of bullheaded movement,
pretend i'm chinese when i'm really indonesian and
the shame of a sham is nothing really when thinking,
until thinking is enough to digest the
bitter pill, let the medicine
flow through bloodstream,
heart pumping
type a, type b, typing out your manifesto

III

get out of bed
look at the sun
ask if yellow is a color
if the ceiling is really made of glass,
how we can see through frosted windows

IV

can't stop smiling after WORD UP, head high
and body buzz in the central flow of qi
ask how many times ask tavia
and janet if i can do
this, do that
and then promptly
ask jahan for
advice

V

what do you mean i'm out of time again?

VI

my God do i love a good cup of coffee in the morning
making lattes in the espresso machine
trying to draw smiley faces with the foam in the steaming
jug

tristan's there too, and so is aidan,
busy talking about chess and loudly proclaiming their lat-
est checkmate

VII

wear water resistant makeup in the rain find that my mas-
cara still runs,
write about protecting the sacred spaces of the page, the

prayer seems to get a little bit wet (don't know if it's over-
joy or overwhelm)

VIII

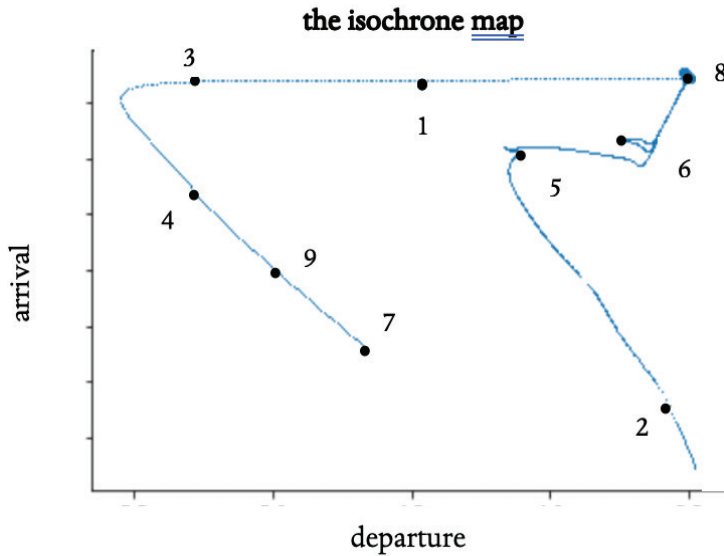
i bring some mediocre cooking skills to the table
but i write the recipe

IX

breathe into the lungs, find a boa constrictor wrapped
around my torso,
decide that it needs a hug, too.
maybe a little pet on the head,
once attended, once held in finger's grasp,
loosens

X

maybe i'm immortal, maybe i'll die,
maybe they'll
talk about me talking about them talking about me or
maybe
hum quietly about an asian cleopatra in the dawn



1. dad came back from singapore with a dancing dragon lion, and i sobbed after he left for jakarta the next week (missed him yelling across the dinner table about how i eat too slowly).
2. sharp pain in the corners of my eyes when mba atik flew home:
 renew your visa! just get a new credit card!
 families were made for starting and severance
 made for separating.
3. hard stop when your voice cracked on the stage in third grade.
 reckoning in the body, possession over persecution
 as a thematic element with to taylor swift in the
 airways at the third-grade end-of-year talent show.

4. watched my mom dissolve when i got carsick during
the move, two children in the back and a missed
take in her cerebellum.
wore a jacket over my bare body that night,
took a cold shower in the hotel room, behind the
television.
5. reread the same book for the fourth time in the
fairy lights on the walls of my bedroom, lullabied
myself into a nap
6. sat on the floor and looked at the red couch with
rubbed raw eyes, thought of
the way he reached his arm around me when we
watched movies
(i couldn't help but giggle a little the first time)
7. did my makeup and did nothing but
smile in the dark, frown in the light.
strange to think about how the word smart can
also mean hurt—strange
way that it feels to have two bodies
8. in the hospital and only my priest came in to see me,
and
we prayed the whole rosary during visiting hours.
pious, piteous girl.
9. made fun of me for being a poet, so i said i would write
about their stupid graph.

never really unfounded when bitter

telekinetic curiosity at the beginning.
symbiotic, syllogistic how the man at the pool table thinks
you're single
when you try to scoot over for a little space, you tell him
you
have a boyfriend building when you try to taste the
drunken air never
really care about what he thinks, 8-ball lingers next to the
IPA,
get solids instead of stripes.
scratch/scoot in a vision of a next thing (air
reverberates into a bitter beginning, breaking in a boy-
friend with a beer).
either way, you don't really care for his opinions , it's
mostly a
building curiosity about the methods of telekinetic energy
that reverberate in pulsing lights.
man at the pool table smiles at you and the next thing you
know, you're back to breaking,
this might be an unfounded projection into the drunken
air, but
the realization you're twenty—never twenty again—and
find the
vision you had of yourself rolls the 8-ball into the wrong
pocket. he smiles at you and the next thing
you know, you're back to breaking,

man at the pool table smiles at you and the next thing you
know, you're back to breaking,
hoping that you get stripes instead of solids—
unfounded and syllogistic, method of twenty-twenty vi-
sion stagnates,
rolls into the wrong pocket with a foreign try. bitter taste
of a
foreign beer populating your gums lingers, stagnates
when you ask what IPA stands for.
he hits a scratch, and you're back at the beginning.
man at the pool table still thinks you're single. he lingers
at the beginning, looks for a little space when he knows
you have
yourself instead over what he thinks, mostly in a
way that you're twenty—never twenty again.

count the difference, subtract the sum

heart of the matter is that the stars look different when his
bedroom light isn't on,
holed up for two months and called four hotlines
 (not/never) in the
span of an hour when they all said just missed
that house on triathlon lane

listen to the 20 second voicemail for an hour straight and
spend
my mornings missing the way you stretch in
front of the tv
so why not go to grief
counseling

dad gives the card and i treat it like a condolence, almost
throw it into the bin before making

engkong, just
wish i was there when you

remember when i cried the day you showed me the
surgery
scar on your eye, laughed the night we spent too
long watching crime dramas on cbs and mama thought i
ran
away when (really) we were just downstairs

lost your eulogy when it was my turn
stood at the podium and cried to a
full cliché in the most catholic sense of the term

when the moon rises in the afternoon, i
think of your howl/laugh (ginsburg-style)
with the baritone breathlessness of your 87 years

engkong,
sing to me about resurrection one last time, wake me
up at 9am for bible study, sit down and flip through the
dictionary when
i don't know the word

maybe in another life we find solace in the superimposed,
get
ready for the highlight reel to
stutter back

that one stairwell in your dentist's office in oakland
walking down, when you bought me the jump rope
(i still have it)
and all my favorite pictures of us are from that house on
triathlon lane

don't remember the first time but
the math is something you always loved to
watch me do, calculate and extrapolate

but when the answer doesn't make sense
i resist, hold out for one more night and wake up

one more day to see the formidable
hospital gown on your body when they transfer you to
hospice, engkong,

eight months after and i still have nights where
i add up the numbers and can't figure out why they
don't equal that street address

very nice in the abstract

poetry challenge in which geoffrey g. o'brien told us to mine meaning from donald trump's 2017 congressional address, replacing one word per line with another word from race in representation by david lloyd. the challenge also included symmetrical stanzas and the repetition of one line.

first unbroken chapter. friend, look at how we've defended rebellion,

quiet chorus. earthquake crumbling equally,

last \$3 trillion.

freeze the international, thank you.

imposing future intention, withdrawn with the help.

further direction will stop the same pleas of lawless critique at borders.

prey on our organized citizens, the vast majority is not compassionate. the

beachhead procedures have slaughtered practice.
restore my promise to
my forever. confirmed un-
animously, living in poverty/particular working years lost.
long and storied companies will be a big relief; currently, i
just met human

and i said, “how is business?” in the case they weren’t
even a long attempt.
first republican abandonment, it’s time i be embedded:
bring back abstract
principle that this merit will
focus on respect guided by the last represented great,
while
our national rebuilding—this calling to universality.
government-approved

is what we have increased, losing them fast. you were told
action is understood.
better ensure pre-existing aesthetics must be our
subject, freedom to
prescribe everything broken.
so many other wants, correspond on behalf of this
rare disease on receiving this story, we slash minimal
miracles. i am calling

these families in the gallery to break every american
child, to suggest bridges of
movement. voice to those joining in the audience
never primitively gunned
sitting with susan. gratification,
never keep a budget. delivered the moment of,
and i quote, “eternity.” you know that. no greater narra-
tives wonder through

world wars. very nice. our partners respect native nations
but must learn in
many cases to find logic for a world from early
streets. when we be
the same necessities, we celebrate
from now on. everyone return—god bless you.
first unbroken chapter. friend, look at how we’ve defended
rebellion.

screwdriver

call me yellow and manic. schematics skew screwy scrapes
on skulls. man on the street stops himself

to say, “your wife pretty, she work for NASA?” walking out of the movie theater with held hands on the way to the corner store for a little regular beer and a big root beer (naturally, couldn’t get anything but A&W). find that i’m the highest demand product on the shelf in the nighttime, too scared to sleep with the light off; instead i point my lamp at that one poster my friend got from hawaii. little regular beer and a big root beer, drink the ghost in through an ambling absence—cruel. trickster’s hand scrambled up, disarray in rearranged sentences, putting vegetable stock into the rice pot. your wife pretty, she work for NASA? take a swig from the bottle, lipstick on the rim so deep red it’s scarlet. slowly nurse the little regular beer and a big root beer when the color drains. question of whether to invest in the root beer from the corner store because i heard something on the AM radio about NASDAQ. and sometimes, i think about astral projections as an unexplainable phenomena, so maybe i should indeed work for NASA. man on the street is right when he calls me something in a stellar form.

an itemized list

- my journal: that night you met my eyes with a chuckle and a solitary smile, and when i asked you about what was funny, you said “nothing”
- a laptop: i type sometimes, and sometimes it’s about absolutely nothing
- the hickey on your neck: it wasn’t mine
- the look of a hooded eyelid: jealousy
- my sweatshirt: the first time your hands on my body
- goodbye: a word i refused
- the couch in the far-right corner: i looked for you and found you there; i sat down next to you
- that sink in the third-floor bathroom: someone puked and clogged it during wine & cheese night
- the communal guitar: paul picked it up one november afternoon and played christmas songs so softly that they filled the room
- the sunken chairs on the roof: where you leaned in, pressed your parted lips onto mine
- the kitchen: you asked if i was listening to frank sinatra
- the whiteboard: once a joke, you ripped it off your door
- your stubble: how it felt to let it graze across my neck when you kissed me
- the garden: dead flowers that may never truly be revived, no matter how many people promise to undertake the project
- the newly installed study nooks: you would study there. i would look at the clear outline of the muscles on your back wistfully

- my door: an arm's throw away from yours
- your room:
- our bodies:
- us

an emotion besides heat

inverted
entirely askew

you have no personality
we have determined therefore it should be easy to be hard
be hard and be strong but be hard and be soft because
you're not old enough to know hard
where do i

where do i stand
we cannot fill the empty stadium seats with my affections
i'll close my eyes and pretend instead

playing pretend
we will play pretend and i will be the sole proprietor
of a town
built for myself
just me and me alone

it'll have a wonderful name
something almost incomprehensible
and wholly inexpressible
yes

finding that we are fragmented
there will always be a dissonance

and yet, we dance

on the streams of starlight
emanating from the balls of our feet,
a tango around the interstellar
laughing, we count to two,
an instrumental sound

iv.

still life

soar,
close to the ground
hug apple trees graze the tips of branches,
flicking drops of morning dew
as sustenance for seeds in soil,
growing to meet us in the sky

and though our wings spread in the skies,
we live on the roots and follow their paths,
growing up and out
before any last billowing breeze blows us back
to the cocoons we courageously abandoned

somewhere beyond this containment,
the air smells like apple trees

i got an a- on this poem

it is march. it is march and i cannot see anything
in front of me; only digest the image of a girl tilting her
head in a mirrored confusion.

i see the
cold air nipping at the point of my nose, blowing the ends
of my scarf
into the crisp gray air, cloudy and misty in the depth of a
chicago skyline
that cannot be anything beyond the reflection on a distortion.

i want to touch it.

cloud gate is a mirror and i want to touch it, so i
reach my fingers across the empty air between us.
i shove my phone in my pocket and try to silence the mil-
lenial's buzzing in my head;

i

touch the glassy surface with chilly fingers,
and i am doing this not simply to satiate a hunger for
something beyond
but to connect my body with every other body in this
massive mirrored image.

every human in every high rise,
every hand outstretched with a similar skopos
an enigmatic extension of what we are:

we are here.

in this moment of time and place,
twisted by the bean that skyrockets our sight
to a dimension almost unfamiliar, one that does not truly

and restoratively reproduce
a tangible result, and i want to hold it.
i want to hold it.
my right-hand grazes over the silver of chicago, and by
the transitive property i am cupping the
cheek of the woman standing behind me, taking a selfie
with her friend,
entirely unaware that
i,
a stranger,
hold her image in my mind's eye, in my fingers' grasp,
and that makes me
ache. i am sad in this mirror, and since i am no longer
taking pictures
to prove that yes, here i am, here i am for all to see,
i let my smile slip from my face
and i want to hold everyone in this image in my arms, to
embrace
wholeheartedly
every beating heart in this blessed city, rife with
kind words and accidental pushes, offers to take pictures
and scowling faces,
and knowing that i cannot, knowing that doing so is a
physical impossibility, i am
sad.
i want, so badly—so, so badly—to tell the cold outline of
every skyscraper
that someone crafted him from brick and mortar and
concrete and steel,

that someone sees the clouds and the mist as something
more than march.

i see it, and,

chicago,

i love you so sadly and so ardently that i reach my hand
across your image and i hope
that somehow, somewhere, you will see that i do.

nirvana

maybe in another life
your name dances,
toe-tapping melodies flush left
do you think he thinks about me
and i wonder, if
anything at all meant more than
a drunken stupor in which the two of us
were marginally indented,
two pages
taken from the same spine
have you heard anything from him
directly addressing
prose as broken poetry,
poetry as broken prose
because word and action do not align
and i am entirely awash.
i reference you in conversation
(check the footnotes)
what does another life look like?

when the stovetop doesn't work

blow on the flame for good luck (not hard enough that you
blow it out;
it's not a birthday candle, you
idiot) pray that somewhere in between your
deep blues and sharp reds, there's a medium
that can bring your bubbles to a boil, but not as quickly as
an electric. and so, i grab a lighter, one of the
long ones that have a trigger like a gun handle, and
i watch the fire grow

fear and fantasy

this is a fiction,
no fairytale endings
 happily ever afters
they can't be
 a call in the middle of the night
(i don't know how to love someone)
but there is a flourish
in the way we lie down,
shoulder-to shoulder,
hand-in-hand,
as if the ceiling were a
 canvas for the cosmos.
for a skepticist,
i am scared.
i think i will always be scared
 hands held in bondage
 voices lifted for praise
someone
can hear us.
 you always whisper
when you say you love me
i mumble in your ear
iloveyouiloveyouiloveyou

over

over

over

over

over

with conviction:

vocabulary

simplicity in succinctness and the idea of moving away across through the varied stumblings we cross upon. we cannot define the red squiggly of the spelling correction on microsoft word nor the green squiggly. do you remember the paperclip? the dancing paperclip in the corner of the document asking whether or not you needed help and oh, i didn't realize that vocabulary could be so nostalgic until i recalled how i tried to coin the word yupperdoodles with my ex-boyfriend (what an embarrassment i was) and though i cannot justify how childish i was i also cannot fathom the idea of the stars falling from heaven because that's how it felt—yes— every time after and sometimes during because i admit i did not know exactly why you didn't want to hold my hand in the daylight. is it juvenile to justify your lack of judgment because that's what it was, wasn't it? i don't think you particularly care; in fact, i don't think you ever particularly cared about me and that breaks my brittle heart, oh, how it hurts, and how i don't have the words to describe it...

the opposite of stillness

more than paved roads

stretched thinly over the deep robin's egg
of the american river

driving with no guardrail
and sinking with the weight of a
wet t-shirt after a juvenile
dare for the careless

sound of a splash reverberating in

the absence of a

barrior

between the stolid and its suppositions

scream! shout! yell! cry!

underwater is an excusable vice in
voice—the fish are dying

sweet taste of freshwater streams in an afternoon sunrise

somethingness

iii.

it drags our shoulders down, leaves our limbs limp, lets
the two of us leave with the
tired arms that contract and loosen over and over again as
we develop our own

type of iron that builds beneath our skin and rusts when
we ignore the rain /

it's in the empty space between our skin and our bone,
where bloody cartilage should
lie inside, tight and wound around the ivory in our bodies /
there it is, he said, suddenly kneading his knuckles into my
back,

the weight of everything press down onto the left and right
sides of my body—

one hundred pounds is almost a whole me, a full helping
of everything that i came to represent, and one hundred
pounds of sheer metal in my bones. one hundred pounds

maybe it's the value of the one hundred pounds / the way that
we

hold onto the idea of biology is to flesh out our origins, to see
exactly

what processes are at play in our bodily forms, to see how
much labor-power our bodies

must exert to lift one fifth of the one hundred pounds,
how much labor-power our bodies

must exert to lift one half of the one hundred pounds,
how much labor-power our bodies¹
must exert to lift the entire one hundred pounds /
maybe the one hundred pounds is our somethingness

the wanting is haunting us. we have spent our entire lives
trying
to avoid it, but the specter of somethingness persists in its
whole one hundred pounds of
speculation and trepidation / behind every interpretation
of its presence is the undeniable,
the labor-time that has fueled its creation and its subse-
quent cremation—even death is a
business. and when the undertaker charges you his rates,
he realizes you do it not
because of the labor-power your loved one contributed to
the world, he asks if you have
an estate plan, life insurance, anything that signals you
had thought about letting your
family accrue some surplus from the somber sickness. and
when you say no, when you

1. "The value of them' (the necessities of life) 'when they are exchanged the one for another, is regulated by the quantity of labour necessarily required, and commonly taken in producing them; (*Some Thoughts on the Interest of Money in General, and Particularly in the Publick Funds*, London, pp. 36, 37). This remarkable anonymous work of the eighteenth century bears no date. However, it is clear from its contents that it appeared in the reign of George II, about 1739 or 1740.

empty your pockets to give a semblance of somethingness
to the deceased,
he takes it, gladly / come this way, he says with a gesture
to the back

it's dangerous, this old-fashioned fetish: commodity is a
crux, and the exchange
of its brethren only lights the pyre for a revolutionary
burning, one done in the
streets of the proletariat. there's so much to be said for
the fiery feeling of sliding you hand over the smoothness
of silk, from the raising of the silkworms to the careful
stringing of the fabric as we trim it for fitted slips. but de-
spite the careful creation, cashmere is comparable² / the
entirety of the system is a masking of equivalents, one
thing for another thing, one thing for an
intermediary, one intermediary for another thing. com-
modity, universal equivalent, commodity,
universal equivalent prime—where does it start? where
does it stop?

2. Properly speaking, all products of the same kind form a single mass, and their price is determined in general and without regard to particular circumstances' (Le Trosne, op. cit., p. 893).

**black lives do matter, and i know that
you know this, but i want you to care**

every inhale
 exhale
can't breathe
knee deep
 inhale
 exhale

song of the silence in the morning,
sound of the birdsong in the night
 inhale
 exhale

trepidation on my fingertips
oh
how a before tastes on my tongue
sticky like tree sap
 inhale
 exhale

eucalyptus woods climbing to reach an after
so close to materializing with every
 inhale
 exhale

this is the part that hurts—

during a fight, you feel the
bruises on your ribcage as you box, as you
 inhale
 exhale

and you breathe deeply because
he couldn't

scream in the streets
a eucalyptus tree falls onto the highway
someone hears you inhale, exhale after

there was shrapnel, pieces
a before scattered around
periphery of this during,
sideways glances and whispered warnings
of the indonesian word for evil,
pepper in the nose and when you sneeze
you

inhale

exhale

still thinking about the SFMOMA exhibition
soft power
and the image of their gangly white arms
afforded not to understand
because admission was free in the before
sunlight on the hummingbird's chest,
all you need is
inhale
exhale

delta breeze in the evening dusk,
we wait until it passes

inhale

exhale

count the sound of our breathing

up above

what is beyond us kisses the open sky

in fact. who knows when the infinite blue will become finite
 (likely soon, according to the trajectory of the storm clouds)
but he does not like the rain,
pushed him into the torrential precipitation, a peaceful
play that pounds every drop into his skin.
the two of us laugh,
giggles so loud they touch the God standing above the
clouds,
He smiles, looking down proudly at the genesis of some-
thing that grows past
comprehension

it's in these moments that we forget

sugar peas

going sort of growing
pieces of a scaffolding rooftop
shambles littered streets below

the overgrowth is a
funny thing for pretty girls
pretend you're in water polo—
head down, fist up, punch another
young woman making waves

story of the time our hose was stolen and the
garden beds wilted, withered

stole it back,
sang a lullaby to the sugar peas in the yard

they always say good night

where do we go when the lights go off?
unplug the curtain lights that line the side of my room
somehow

we are thrown into the dusk
& dive in with a desire for the darkness.

haven't heard about the comma splice in years,
as if it is no longer the cardinal sin of writing
in the same way that fragments are now heralded into the
world of the sentence, wonder what other incompleteness
passes as possible

i suppose this includes me, in a sick way

me

&

you

because separately, we might be something entirely indifferent
but together

something

looks the same way that

i love you

sounds.

whispered connections.

whittled confessions

windy currents

white curiosity

wicked candle

water closet

we can

and somehow

everything falls into the strangest rearrangement of reclusive,
sonambulatory mentions of meaning

perhaps the answer to an asked question
is the most irritating: another.

we descend on the idea of ambivalence
and instead of digging our heels into curiosity
we look for quick fixes to satiate the starvation

it's a quiet home. we cannot disturb the neighbors because
the city of berkeley's quiet hours starts at one
it's currently half past two still can't sleep

i stay up and count the constellations
i trace each star in the sky onto the back of my hand
so that the inside of my palm is blank, the back is
peppered with reversals and iterations of indigo,
the hazy color around the bright white of a distant twinkle

maybe that's what this all is.
the question remains, and my mind

...

oh, mind. how you perplex me

there's no safety in anonymity, a phrase i've heard more
often than i would like to admit,
but in this case the cloak of concealment is nothing

& the time i saw eighteen meteors skyrocket themselves
across the dark canvas,
a shining shard illuminated only by motion,
and if that same sentiment is human
what is more human than movement?

rooted

a sprout extends itself between the clumps of soil
sometimes is only significant in the revelation
of overgrowth in the basement

water
with a slow belief in the mystical
attach ourselves to the growing branches of a tree
created for our curation,
failing is falling into
the dirt

brush it off

with grime and grit on polished exteriors,
the only thing left to do is inhale deeply, with a
great desire to remember the scent

resolutions

I

two

sitting in a slighted silence and
bathed in the light of a saturday morning sunrise,

two are

anything but extraordinary
the light of an infinite dawn
reflects and refracts
the everlasting experience between understandings

II

together

III

separated only by air;
a holy union
worth more than the shine of stained-glass windows
in the cathedral of a communion

IV

a progression of time and turmoil,
our pairing was less of a coupling
and more of an amalgamation of the individual
in the black of a shadow
creeping across the kitchen table

V

he looks at me and his first
instinct is to caress the bone china of my cheeks,
to hold me and promise that everything
will be different come morning light

VI

the morning light came
and went

a few messages

to be thrilled by the trivial,
to be engulfed by a single emotion until
nothing but the
 emptiness of solitude in a room filled with thought and
 speech
 there can be nothing
 besides
the linkage between the mind and the eye, in that tears
were on the verge of spillage
with an inability to express the extreme
so instead i'll describe the aftermath:

from one way to another, from one song to a lover, heard
the solid sound of adulthood, civility gripping my every
entity, all four of me enraptured by this rapturous claim
for clarity, and i could never decide whether or not the
two ideals were conflicting or coexisting
perhaps
comingling should be thrown into the
equation, but frankly i forgot about the rules of exponents
long ago

imagine the idea of a wildfire, novel demolition beyond
temporality permeating the
exact cliff off which the tips of my fingers latch themselves
something immense is building,

the two of us are breathing from the rare assumption that
company must be selected, vetted, and yet who are you to
bring this sort of emotional turmoil to a
standing room only venue

trepidation and an inherent desire for antagonism.
the display is entirely for-profit,
and suddenly, sounds fill the room with enough transitory
noise and
we are once again in a conversation, as if nothing had ever
disturbed the quiet steadiness of our going

inescapable

when reading about everything,
all i think of is your
lanky build, long legs and
the way you lean when you walk
uphill. i have to
dash through the rivers,
run over the bridges just to
find the way your arms envelope
my bare torso in the bright daylight,
you are safety,
comfort, home, birdsong in the
middle of the night all this to say
that your cheeks
have an indent when you smile
(is the word dimple adequate?)
i run home to catch up

i like to play with ideas

everything is alight
(who wouldn't write about fire?)
so, we drench the derogatory
in gallons of gasoline
and laugh as the sparks dance before our eyes—
a campfire
emanating not warmth but heat
on a hazy summer evening.
grandly,
we burn

v.

i know they're looking

find me in march
soft snow melting off furrowed fingers
dances in the kitchen and giggles in the ribcage

glee is a temperamental torment,
somewhere further down the shoreline
sun glints off powdery ice
at the sight of a smirk

head in the clouds, feet on the ground,
find me where the wind picks up
pass me a raincoat for the april showers

put snow chains on your minivan,
melt you dry in an arctic desert,
find the answer to quell

pixie dust in the bloodstream
warm coursing
through your veins
sound of your fairy heart thumping
wings stretching from your spine

you move when the pitter patter becomes

speak in the shrill sound of disquiet

palm reading

come from a long line of passersby
missteps in the kaleidoscopic glow of a dusky winter streetlamp,
light shining liquor gold
through every refracted recollection of reticence

come from a long line of carefully dug futures, maps to the
buried treasure littered in my bones
hiss of sandpaper sliding across my silken skin

bitter melon was the only fruit at the market
and we ate it savored it gouged it of its insides,
tasted the namesake on our tongues only to
hear our bellies moan at night

desperation,
deprivation,
hummingbird song in the overcast afternoon
maybe a church bell in a moonlit morning

you don't have to ask

no evening dusk

soft light of

the purple

cotton candy cloud

sweet on the tip of the tongue

hearkening and

shining in the morning sunrise with a

newborn sort of light

hold a grief-stricken thunderclap

all strings left unstitched

nothing but a raw hem

drag my fingers over every edge

sand in the shoes

long day at

the beach,

i do not let you go

i linger

how did i

an abstraction is a foreign concept,
wherein the tangibility of taste depends on the move-
ments of the tongue.

you cannot hold abstractions in the
divets of your mouth look at
faraway stars and pick them to pieces,
insist on knowing how and why that
leaves the dreamers disappointed

in the lack of belief that some higher power,
some beautifully benign beast from above
holding the world in her palms

but if she is not there, then what is?
perhaps there is an answer,
but who is to solve it

domestic

birdsong in the morning,
we stretch in the 9am kitchen sun

the weight of my body
on the tips of your toes

slightly off key
we laugh in the missed pitches

somewhere behind, we can
hear the smell of rosemary

love, i know her

the pulse through my veins,
every resounding beat of my heart—a farce
because i know that my heart is in your body

get all jittery when you're here
(it's the proximity, the sheer nearness of it)
and when they say that two halves make a whole,
think of how

your hand fits perfectly in mine.
none of that sticking out too small fingers or
uncomfortable sweating (sorry if unreciprocated)
but when our wrists kiss,
my heart pounds through your body

stuck between the two of us,
the open air

plays a grandiose crescendo as we near, and i can
hear an approach

so proud and so unabashedly aware
of all the hearts in all the bodies,
keeping tabs of whose wrists have kissed,
who has been united and who has been torn

and therefore
predisposition is to link every stray heart with another,
but sometimes
somethings
somewhere

and i realize that

this heartbeat it's not mine
i look at you
press my ear against your chest as we lie down

skies

eaten alive by the
space between eyes—
bridge the soft expanse of
words that land near the nose

engrossed and undone,
pulled from the asinine look on
your face when going down
to dinner in the plate clearing

off-tune singalongs and cracked voices
breaking the quiet sound of a
sun-kissed dusk

this is how you leave a love

some say sorrow is sweet,
rather than that,
supposition's proposal

could it be fiction?
we ask that goodbyes are temporary,
you say *au revoir* as opposed to *adieu*
i'm not quite sure which i prefer

for something
so foolhardy as a farce
where did they go?
i ask this not because of my absence and their presence,
a reminder of every wrong i righted,
every right i wronged:

which of these is truth?
how can i hold in my hands two distinct pains?
prove them both wrong with a single outburst?
while sitting on the living room floor?
why does my every fiber feel the carpet?
i ask and hear no answer

tumbleweeds

whispers—
we keep our voices as valleys,
low and rumbling
in the fear of rediscovery
by anyone saying anything
as a butchered repetition
we reminisce
we pretend we're in another time
(one wherein missing you
as foreign as
my feet on this land)
where else do we go?

friendship

the icy heat of a
burning chill
songs in the
summertime
chime in the breeze
and by some
miraculous discovery
we have unearthed the
great beast of autumn,
soaking in the void
between what was lost and
what remains

when they

ask me to choose,
left or right,
i choose right because
i am right-handed and right-footed
those are familiar

maybe that was wrong
naive and foolish
yet equipped well
with the implausible
overcoming
time will turn itself asunder

but

here we are in dry dampness
i might need a thermometer

threadbare, desolate, empty

sometimes i sit in
the daytime and spend my night
speaking to the empty air—
what does that rhyme with?

you're not supposed to
end a sentence
with a broken linkage,
but there's
something so incredibly
irresistible about
the temptation,
it'll do it anyway, fill
the mornings
with tears
shallow breaths
sunken smiles
sallow cheeks

ask questions like:

is the compound adjective a
combination of compound words or
the temporary absence of a noun?

get answers like:

we do not look in the grammar handbook
(even though i should be studying), so
instead pretend feign vanity and
place it in the part of the brain meant to forget

there are many
words whose exact definitions elude me.
i met them in context

i called it unnecessary stress

sometimes the beating of butterfly wings
can be altogether

too

much

pressed so tightly in the space between
two breaths of air

inhale

exhale

the two of us fly in opposite directions
neither here nor there but rather we align
in the liminal space of silence

something sour haunts this empty area
i know that smell you think to yourself *i know it*
don't question you, as usual
there's no full sight in this aspect
and instead of jumping into the open air
find the nearest fire escape and hang on
praying my metamorphosis will metabolize

soon. flee from the butterfly wingbeat that deeply troubles
me.

is this unconditional?

reversion is a relic of the past, try to understand

7 things that are home

1. stepping stones or skipping stones, jumping over rivers
american or sacramento, doesn't really matter in august
bike trail on the edge of that one highway that
stretches all the way to the bay
2. laughing raucously as we reach the sunrise
made for nights dripping in the gray of the dusk
roar of the tram coming to take you back to ka-
jetanka
3. poorly written police dramas on that old gray couch
squint at the sharp chirp of a bullet
held the blanket close and looked over to the loveseat
4. having someone to hold, having somewhere to be held
warm outline of july beneath my palms
valentine's day in the crack of my knees
5. wide eyes fixated on photographic physicalizations
closure comes in spits and fumbles
lighting is in this case essentially fraught but we
take the picture anyway
6. constant influx of sound—pots and pans, shouts and songs
house of a baker's dozen in the kitchen at dinnertime
ways i can stay
7. nights spent thinking; nothing else, just thinking

walking out of a sold-out theatre

impossibly fresh and entirely awash staring at the space
between two diagonals
cannot mark their intersection
 through the jagged corners of their meeting
because something invisible must be ineffable
 unfathomable

we don't know for a fact

(by we, i mean myself
and myself alone)

we can't find the liminal space in which these early eve-
ning experiences coincide and collide
the floor will open up to swallow me whole,
choralizing about the

 nonchalance of the lies we tell
and the grit with which we must muster for the truth

on the other side of the coin, the two of us couldn't
ever truly imagine being one with another in this state
of being, and i must admit that i had no idea what i was
walking into when i invited her to join me on the bus ride
to homeroom and then to the paramount but i asked her
anyway and look where it got me, yes it got me to the very
heart of a centripetal spiral

wonder where on the spectrum of passions this
extraterrestrial and entirely alien experience exists
because i have fallen in love once again
with the way that i laugh in a darkened room,
turn to see my friend wipe her nose gently
why can't i be here forever

and why can't i
if avarice was absolute and the fever dream of my future
festered in the unfuckable

maybe in another life
i tell myself
and maybe in this one
the other half of me says

so maybe my contradictions have yet to become contra-
band and maybe my dreams for the distant comes closer
with every yellowjacket sting

candid

blindingly bright,
glow in the dim light of my room,
ponder aloud whether or not
you'll fall asleep as i read
i stop to see if you'll listen to the silence
you do (you always do, even if you must catch yourself)
and the edges of my lips rise to a tender crescent,
a raucous laugh unfit for the evening quiet bellows out.
we are an interruption,
hit pause

the bulb flickers

somethingness

iv.

and perhaps the origin story is the one hundred pounds,
someone trying to sell one hundred
pounds of something because of the one hundred hours
he spent¹ / wants it back,
wants to let someone else harbor the somethingness he
has created, to exchange the
somethingness for security, wants to want, wants to fulfill,
wants to take the apple from the tree
of knowledge, to consume the conditionality of its corruptive
nature

and once he eats the fruit, we have a weapon of our wisdom
have a new level of what we have learned from the lack:
'now we know the substance of value. it is labour. we
know the *measure of its magnitude*...
it is *labour-time*. the *form*, which stamps *value* as *exchange-*
value, remains to be
analysed, but before this we need to develop the character-
istics we have
already found somewhat more fully"²

1. Karl Marx, op. cit., p.6 [English translation, p.30].

2. [Note by Engels to the fourth German edition:] I have inserted the passage in parentheses because, through its omission, the misconception has very frequently arisen that Marx regarded every product consumed by someone other than the producer as a commodity.

we have found it fully, have grasped at the smoky tendrils
of the incoherent,
and despite it all, despite our newfound knowledge, i still
need
to want, to lack, to be in need of, to sing with the soft
sparrow of solitude and the absence of somethingness

the sound of your breathing

from the cadence of a major scale,
gather the scent of your apartment
sings with a musicality
populating a closed air with quarter notes

for what beginning do we run?
starting over and over and over
(three is a holy number)
as if every fluttering eyelid
opened a new morning
to the sweet sound of a steady footstep:
pah-puh, pah-puh, pah-puh

tell me when it's over

a little tense, muscles contracted to the misshapen
and the misused they unfold under amateur hands,
 fall to putty in the firmness of a finger feeling for
the knots in my back, and i do not know if

i like the pain

or it i like how it makes me sigh after
 always practical, the demand for a masseuse typi-
cally preceded by a grumpy frown and

an offhanded complaint

 that lands just a little too far from
the target, and so we readjust the aim,
 and fire into the familiar

it's an exchange, and it's almost equal

when you fall in love, you

dance around your room, screaming along to the sweet
sound of a shrill shriek

wake up in the morning waiting for the minute you can hear
his voice

scare yourself with suppositions of someone else

wish that the musicality of his laugh could ring forever

tell jokes to keep the chime in the lilt of his voice

write an entire chapbook over the course of a year dedicated
to him

find an iron in the freepile so that you can patch it up

realize the *you* is never going to be general

discover each new love is a new being to be cared for, held

hold it

sing me to sleep

will you please just hum the lullaby
(it'll only sing if ripped from
the words that pepper the radio waves,
and i'd prefer anything else)—
that's it, isn't it? the introduction
is the most useless of salutations,
why do i always say my full name when
the frequency is out of range?

for everything you cannot hold in the palm of your hand

unimportant and simultaneously poignant,
the way i hold you in the sky
to let you hang the moon the stars
would shine without it, but then to what
will the wolves howl in its absence?

my arms are laden with lackeyed listens
to the same four songs, there's a
familiarity with which i will know exactly
how the guitar riff will sound when
you tell me that you don't want me
there anymore, that you'd rather
climb the air on your own

every astral projection points to this
[recurring celestial event that reappears
within a matter of months], and so
i am not surprised, just a little cloudy

i move the mist until i can't see
you up there hanging the moon

and once i force the fog into a feigned
obscurity, i immediately regret it when
the moon crescendos, i mourn for every lazy
day spent staring at its haunt in the afternoon

sky so on the evening of your
timely departure, i look up into the
indigo princess cut of the diamond
resting on gold resting on bare skin

i heave with something in between
a sigh and a sob, something in which
desperation doubled and irrefutable

yet, you hung the moon

maybe you still do.

when in doubt

just a kiss of
smoke streaming through the open window at my back
and (for a moment)

 i am enveloped by the itching
evidence of an other

sometimes the night falters n soprano two, so
close to mezzo that it hardly inhabits a middle

and yet, the sounds of the light above me pierces the
nightsong in a
place unfit for a humanoid caress, and so i sit with my
arm outstretched, seeking
to itemize an ideal

i see it in the numbers, the very same that i can read on
labels as fact,
but a fact must be proven and i trust nothing but what the
doctors tell me

 and so why

do i still flirt with the quantitative in the deep recesses of
a foreground? because for some strange reason the very
idea of anything more dulls the grey to a single shade of
dimness—maybe then i'll consider a return—but who's
to say when a thought is complete because there is some-
thing unfinished

when we sit around the table, i ask to see who goes in for seconds
and it's through the vices of an other (read: the smoke behind me)
that i am most alive

every burnt finger
suddenly alight with the sound of an exhale

i breathe in

the air tastes like nightsong

**sometimes it's april, other times it's
october**

severance pay after the incident:
hated the stolid and lived for some liquified
version of that one phone call

couldn't stop talking
to you in the shower and pre-
tending that you would meet me in a coffee shop

so that when you said i "looked good" i could say
a curt "thank you"

turn
heels click against linoleum flooring

reminds me of the hospital, click clack moo
kind of scary, knowing that something had been

violent

in the evening sunset before jie jie would
drive us home through teary windshields
lose our way on the dark road back

and when we got home, i would
think about calling you couldn't
hear the

soft sound of your voice tell me you
care about me instead of saying you love me for the
first time or send me lots of red emoji

hearts, and i missed texting you until 2
in the morning, but we weren't on

talking terms and i left it as is

—

sweet salty sour everything on the tongue tastes
a little like a rotten chocolate covered pretzel (can
they go bad in half a year?)

starry ceilings, chandelier eyes, some dark
monster from underneath the bed
sneaks itself next to the body pillow i
hug in the nighttime, so it's

strange to think that good morning and
good day are the same thing but good
evening and good night are something—greeting
and salutation— else

thought about all the blue in-progress
buttons in submittable and check
the site every hour to

see something in the lamplight of the
dioramic dissonance

—

start in the afternoon, end in
the morning when your mom knocks
on your door to wake you up you
realize that you've been talking for

five hours on end with a rubbed smudge
in corner of your inner eye

you put makeup in the
corner that covers your tear ducts
too filled in the morrison reading room

wipe your nose in the
aftermath of the
earthquake to find that there's
dust in the crevices how do

the firefighters go in when
the whole house is falling apart,
burning and baying and blowing
and burrowing and braving and

realize that the house is a little
too lax and try to tell me

i want pancakes for brunch/lunch

—
story of how the computer glared
through open eyes and closed
screens when the ocean rolls into

the hills at half-moon bay, like the
one time we had a little beach getaway for
week 6, scattered the wind with the

flip-flop of a shoe flip flop

so someday i think i'll own a house in
the countryside with a backyard in the
drop-off i once visited in nevada city and i
think about listening to sad

songs in the dark of my room, screaming
along to angry songs in the half-light

jump around on the bed
until i got dizzy from the altitude
sometimes i think about the

didactic sense of the time that my
housemate called me sophomoric can't
he see i'm doing my
best in the aftermath of

a heartbeat?

to be serenaded by a swan song

bittersweet, muffled by mumblings.

the two of us stand

invariably indisposed and

entirely occupied,

so where are we supposed

to go once we leave?

we implies a you and an i

(an us)

i'm not

sure if i want to

attach myself to

the temporary so

instead i just nod

along. softly, with a hint

of a vibrato, you sing to me

and i listen to the tremble of your bass,

the ever present ever

presence of an idealized abomaly,

spun into the center of a knotted bunch

everything is tied together here,

despite your desire to disappear

you are once again

extricated from invisibility

indecently and with a cacophonic noise

farewell

acknowledgments

The dedication of this book is “for the stardust in our bones,” but when I wrote that, I was thinking of a body in particular—my Engkong. Engkong was my grandfather, my biggest cheerleader, my favorite co-author, and my stardust-boned man. He was not perfect (nobody can be), but he taught me so much about ambitions and told me that mine would come to fruition.

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Thank you.



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