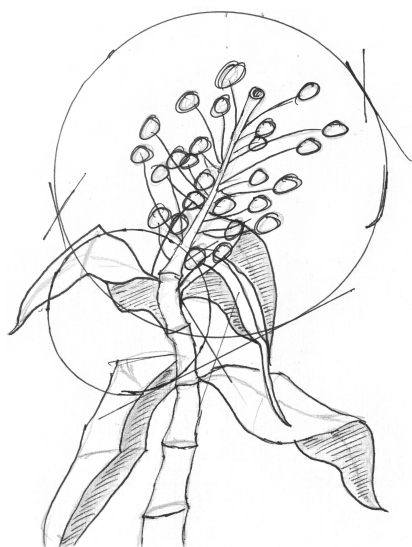


BABYLON EFFECT

2ND EDITION

Ben Buchanan



AGAIN, BEGINNING AGAIN
DECEMBER 2018 // APRIL 2019

INCLUDING APPENDIX MATERIAL
MARCH 2016 // DECEMBER 2020

LOAM OF THE EARTH WASHING ASHORE

BABYLON EFFECT 2nd Edition

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FOR THOSE IN GLASS TERRARIUMS
WITH TONGUES OF FIRE

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FOREWORD

After publishing *Drift Illogical* earlier in the year, I knew I wanted to remake my first poetry collection *Babylon Effect*. It was typeset using a completely different program than my other two volumes of poetry, and the styling left a lot to be desired. So I set out to make a version of *Babylon Effect* that would look and feel as if it belonged side by side with collections like *Another Flow* and *Drift Illogical*.

What you hold now is that version, the new *2nd Edition* of the book. The main matter content contains the same pieces I published in the first edition of the book, but I've added two new appendices to the back. The first appendix, *BEFORE BABYLON*, features a selection of pieces that were written before any of the material that appeared in the first edition, some even spanning back to early 2016. The second appendix, *WORDS NEVER SPOKEN*, contains a number of poems that were cut from all three of my previously published volumes.

With this new edition complete, I'm very proud of what I've managed to accomplish with this trilogy of poetry books. Back in late 2018 when I first had the idea to self-publish my work, I couldn't have imagined what it would turn into. I hope you will come to appreciate these labors of love as much as I have, and I hope you will look forward to what material I come through with in the future.

Thank you for reading.

– Ben Buchanan

BABYLON EFFECT

2ND EDITION

PART I // *STRANGE MOTES*

JOYFUL BROOD (MADE RIGHT AGAIN)

Delicately floating there in a brood of jellyfish,
I am being carried by the birth of a new mythos.

When glass cathedrals crack and I am
Despondent in depression without catharsis,
When I look back on beauty's banishment,
There is a room within a sunrise in the East,
It can steal me back from such gaping maws.

Letting willows die,
Making beds in stinging nettles beneath
Atmospheres of ocean current,
I am a shock of beauty in this mad world.

How I turn your morbid death wish into a future.
How I blend into translucent skin,
Sparkling nothing in misty mistakes,
Mistakes made right again.
How I burn once more at the center of this heliocentric being.

Growth in spurts of fitful freedom,
I am born again into a pocket dimension of summer,
Weeping with you.

Weep with me.

Smile, love, this is the future of joy.

PART I

BOTTOMLESS PITS OF LOVE (JAZZHEADS)

Jazzheads drink themselves silly in smokeless rooms
Past the prime of a solstice
And the grooves keep coming like
Digitized bass beats from space
Pounding holes like skylights shattered into
Tattered remains of brain cells

And in the middle of that noise
I wanted to melt away
I didn't want to speak to the wind
I wanted to become it
And curl around every filament of hair
She kept perfectly positioned on that
Hill I chose to die on

I took my last breath
And looked out the window of my grave

And fell back asleep
For it was too sweet a sound to go out on
Like a light in a storm

I have not destroyed myself thus far just so I can
Whistle to myself the lullabies
I miss so much

In the dark
Without a map

Of all these craters and puddles

Of mud

STRANGE MOTES

Bottomless

Pits

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DAWN OF NEWER DAYS

Written in the muffled explosions of fireworks over mystical hillsides is a passage of scripture for those without a reason to believe. Clocks striking their head with the incessant grinding of time ever onward. And yet they cannot seem to give up the cords that bind them to their ghostly graves of the past. I know the gravity pull of such an alluring failure. I know the sweetness of death it promises.

- I. Dawn with me over rain soaked hills,
Watching every leaf waver under our new sunlight,
Waiting for the day when skies of diamond pointillism
Show us every way in which we can
Make the joy of life last a few moments longer.

Shadow corners opening up like flowers before friends, dip your limbs in their honey secrets, test the waters of newer days than even I can fathom. Waves pull at your skin like children to a mother's skirt, innocent in their careless destructions. Roll off of the tides like sunlight off of snowy peaks, names unknown and heights too dizzying to imagine.

- II. The origin of this new mystery is close,
Reach into your humility and pull it out,
Play with the destiny it presents,
The fruition it is trying to achieve.

Blooming with a strangeness like slime in the throat, layers of slowly sliding sadness being shrugged off like snow in this ambivalent sphere. See me there, sitting on the steps to your love? I am only visiting.

- III. Mirth bursting in such quiet possibilities,
Lives branching like mirrors,
Always green with this envy that I cannot contain,
A pain of patience being exorcised from me.

STRANGE MOTES

I am dropping into the wormhole now
I am stretching like taffy without an edge,
Folding into myself,
Becoming a sweetness you
Cannot
Resist

VENDORS AND MERCHANTS

Bleeding edges of softness, extending cilia filaments like mycelium horizons, mountains to ants on a trail of tears, creeping ever upward like monolithic fears of a joy without boundary.

Bottomless pits pockmarked fields with blackness painting ink stains over roiling grass like tumultuous stormy cumulonimbus killers. Charcoal remains of willow lightning strikes, floods witnessed from peaks over dams and river gorges.

Surrogate lust filling canal locks without overflow, perfect liquid tension, surface level reflections, imperfections, hesitations without resurrections, silly little insurrections within limited brain space vectors, vendors of sadness, merchants of death.

I am a merchant.

Depositing seeds of unreality in unknown dimensions, waiting for rapturous blooming to tear the air apart, portals of unimportant fantasy, carry me, daring me to surrender existence to a power that does not exist. Bleary-eyed and prideful, I water the weeds at my feet, I push the thorns further into my flesh. A garland of topiary that shines in the sunlight and stings under your scrutiny.

Get off my back.

Dominant astrology beckons and I step aside to let the starlight pass me by, phases leaving residue on my eyes, still waiting for my pass at the January moon, that bulbous smirk in the sky that pulls your house apart whenever I think of you.

You are dead but still breathing.

Hear the softness enter your veins, quiet but for the tearing of doubt. Revelatory mounting pressure and dissipation of disillusionment, a garnet banishment, sparkling under piano ballads drowning, throat full of pleasure, full of an inescapable passion, unstoppable joy.

STRANGE MOTES

Just as it pushes forth, it pulls away. Supersonic alternation
vibration panes like electrode brain socket lanes, electric veins,
lame synapse misfire like a slip into ballistic pyres.

If you want to be the softness inside me, you can. Bleed into me
perpetually, endlessly, without need for air. Drown yourself in
whatever light means most to you. Down yourself like a glass of
contentment. Make peace with ideas that simply cannot be.

Be free in a way no one else understands.

SHADES OF CHAMELEON CHARM

I. Where am I?

Said Thoreau

You are here

And here is unknowable

Who am I?

Said Thoreau

You are you

And you are unknowable

What am I?

Something in between it all

Something untouched by the materials of death

Darting in and out of prismatic sunlight

Painting the trees with shades of chameleon charm

II. In the shadows of dimmer stars

And reaches of quiet little tributaries

There is a patience like the world

Slowly turning in a cosmic grave

Grabbing at your love without eyes

Secluded and blind and daring

More daring than humanity's thirsting ego

Pressing up against yours

Groping and grasping for purchase

Cloth cross-hatched in tally marks

Over the places it does not know are dying

III. Dire mist circling the moon without end

Comforting stars in satin graves

Without headstones

We make the names for ourselves

And burn them into stars without thinking

About what we used to call ourselves

Animals in velvet cages

Waiting for the reddest meat

The reddest treat on our plate

This planet

A plate to eat from

STRANGE MOTES

IV. Where am I?

Said Thoreau

You are here

Here is my hand

The palm that slowly closes

Like stage curtains

Say your midnight prayers

Amen

VEIN MELTER

Out the window of night there is a plateau of scathing breezes
Invite me for a drink there in the bar
In the sunlight like lemons dropping on your head
Dropping into drinks like pills like blood like
Veins melting under the weight of the lightest stratified bones
Fossils without names
Our future

You could sink into rivers and laugh with me all the while
With a future like that

Innumerable scratches in my floorboards
Not from my nails, no not from mine
From the Devil playing hopscotch over non-Euclidean surfaces

Bending like moss in your hand
About as motivated
Telling of storm clouds without linings, without borders, without
shape

Descent, ascent
Leather curling over naked flesh, s h a m e f u l n e g l i g e n c e
At last
Crafting fortress and bulwark and thin paper wall
Out of books and notes and CD jewel case inserts
(So lovely in their strange physical nature of choice)
Just air that the hawks of shame breathe and cut through
On wings of steel and atoms of violence

Lead me through the hallway here
Concrete collapse over flowing streets alive with the deaths of
innocent tourists
In a land where even the words
I Love You
Can rend the flesh from your eyes
And the jellyfish continue to float beyond reaches unknown

Touch, and feel peaks of nettles before the flash takes your soul
Like a camera
Along the waves that shall hide you from any future explorers

STRANGE MOTES

Midnight
Overlooking
The
Waterfront

Soft shearing of woolly traps I set over my eyelids, never opened
into a real sunlight

Innocent and virginous, brittle with misuse
Like kingdoms of paper walls and nothing at all

Kingdoms of tubes in my throat going down
Themselves

On a day where the Sun can be any color it pleases
But I am here to witness it
And still, I am pleased

In stillness, released, relinquished

Finished
Without
A
License

New heights over steel-tube airplanes
Reactors blowing magma up my spine
All the time

But there are no words for that
There are no meanings beyond a helter skelter conjunction of
random words

And I am the artist like Pollock
Like boxes and bags of unused paints, dried like the saltiest fish on
the shore of a dead planet
Waiting to flow without knowing the end has already set in

Gangrenous
And
Red
Even
Under
Crimson
Sun
Saturation

PART I

Now over those plains on plateaus where even the trees do not
dream of falling into the valley

(of the shadow of death)

Where are the faces of your joy that you promised me?

Where is the golden stair of your graceful falling?

Where have the burning crosses been stowed, where has the hate
gone into hiding?

In a shock of wind

They are invisible

As I have made myself

In the desperation

Of loving

Under veils and shawls of white purity

And eminent auras of purple velvet sashes

Beyond the questioning of the mindless and the dying

But I too am dying

And I too am mindless

In those places where everything is melting

Into my blood

Like a cheese that I cannot

Devour

Quickly

Enough

There is a clock somewhere and I cannot find it

And I cannot kill it

Don't forget

To say

Goodbye

To

Me

From inside the dorms of annihilations, of metallurgy and mystical
muteness

The outside is a darkness that cannot be tamed

But of course

It can never be tamed

Even in lightness

STRANGE MOTES

You reach for the Sun as I reach for anything brighter
And the wrist always comes back without a hand
Like a phantom limb
Returning from war

Washing
Over
Everything
With
The
Widest
Brush

No
Detail

That night when I kissed you and said my goodbyes
I did not know that it would be our last
And that death was surely at my hands
As I passed it like a note in the middle of class
A bomb
A message to your spirit
Through glass thicker than much else I have of my own

I do not regret, I ponder endlessly at what was and what I failed
to see

Green seas of life breathing into me
From beyond coasts unknown to me
Breathing myths and majesty over me
Into places that hadn't yet existed within me

These seas are shrinking, you see?
I am drinking them all up, you see?
They do not belong here, to you, or to me

PART I

The
Mountains
Stand tall
When
They
Are not
Groveling
At
My feet
For
The
Sweetest mercy

I cannot provide them anything more than the endless streams of
entropic nonsense from my mouth

Rush, love, quench, huff, sprinting to the scene where I lay in flames
of self-inflicted misery

Rolling over in a grave not yet dug

Thank
You
For
Riding
With
Me
Thus
Far

PERIODIC DISAPPOINTMENT

What haunted ships we pass in the night
Known only by the slight muffling of whale songs
Beyond steel bulwarks

Ground from dust of departures past
Masts slicing air jetstreams to confetti bits
Evergreen needles to choke on
Slowly and with a subtle pleasure
Not able to be understood by those with
Half a mind

The creation of something abstract
Like the excuses put up to ward off sadness
Like a fire into the oily darkness

The creation of something absent
From whatever I do on any given day
Ghostly vessels of things slipping by on floating icebergs
All the strange objects I never grasped
Because of their innate nonexistence

A swirling slurry of every choice is like a drop of light
Searing and chastising and debilitating
Like something I could
Overdose on

:::

From the bow of this oceanic castle
Love is a ship without any passengers
But the lights are still on

BOUQUET

A strange malevolence in this stale air
Like it wants to starve me of reason
Of purpose

— === —

1. somewhat freshly shorn. miniature ambrosiatic eyeballs.
pupils without passage for light. walls. blackout curtains.
there is too much light getting in. too much sunshine for me
to handle, it makes me want to kiss you, take you, all of you,
then die an inglorious death.
2. ritual bells, habitual regurgitations. hellfire incantations.
spells of malice like pentagrams without religious
connotation. killing caressing. my soul. is a blanket. from
which you cannot stretch your legs.
3. isolated numbers bleeding in the morning. bass lines plucked.
it's all fucked. everything. but only when I look just the
right way. look, love. look this way. turn my face from
destruction with your beauty.
4. golden valleys under winter sunshine. industrial collapse. a
soft simmering in the depression on the scale of a small city.
power plants without buds. no hope of flowers for mother.
I'm sorry.

— === —

The floods are filling the dam
And all the fish are dead
Even though the DEC just restocked them
L a s t m o n t h (?)

This bright cloudless view is a placebo

Give me the real thing
Crimson tulips wavering, wilting
In suburban lawns

STRANGE MOTES

But the lavender smirk as it blooms around my fingers like
concentric rings,
That is where you are,
Ghostly in the way the petals touch my spirit

——===——

5. tiny risers in the corners. a flash of enamel and gum. earth falls into so many colors. I am there, too. I am one of them. see me there, shimmering like stars in our atmosphere.

STRANGE MOTES

Avoiding bottomless pits at the back of Cybercafe, I drove home without realizing. But tonight I did not forget to look up beyond all the yelling. All the arguing. The ruining of a life besides my own. And up there was a ceiling of a giant cavern, no moon left for us lovers. I sometimes hate how easy it is to die a little inside. Sometimes the peeling of green copper and other rusts can feel like such a mournful disintegration. Who am I dissolving into in this slurry of snow, like dark matter soup? My thoughts in superposition, you need a delicate machine to determine their true position. A savage chrome machine like an artificial heart. Beating. Pulsing. Humming. Serenely and without pause. Never a break. Never a rest that isn't just a short death.

(((((0000000000)))

This is all that there is to dream of
Just permutations of reality

A twisting of your neighbor's necropolises into gardens of Eden
And little visions of objects and people that actually matter

That actually make a difference

(((((0000000000)))

Colliding with every option at once
Providing no context for my rebuttals
Relying solely on my capacity to breathe steadily
Defying night-laden cities without sleep

For I too am without sleep
I too am without meaning
Beyond that which you apply to me
Like a bandage over a simple
Paper cut

Twenty years may go by before anything more is realized

BUFFER OVERFLOW

Viscous pressure behind pumping measured in ounces, gallons, wrists slit in warm baths like Roman advice on the end of days. An acidic buffer maintaining a weathered stone wall of a man. Still the bricks chip in sunlight like motes of dust into furnaces for replenishment. Still the rain flows over smooth surfaces I continue to grind at, I continue to rough up. Trenches and valleys and peaks of snowy light. Lights on poles of many colors. Parking lots that empty before you can see the rush of humanity. Backtracking to the cafe, I've got to get dinner, I've got to get my food and fountain drink, I've got to spend my 10 dollars, I've got to pay Tracie at the register, she's such a nice person, even though she sometimes thinks I'm someone else named Nathan. Sometimes I am. Or at least I'd like to be. A little bit of medicine under the pink light of late night patience. Of decompression after ultra-tight maneuvers in all of my blind spots. I operate on sounds and the sudden intuition of 5 months on the job. There are numbers of the universe in my head. 4065. 4053. 4048. 4011. 4959. 4608. 4612. 3616. 77918. 4076. 4080. On and on the belt spins and spins and splits open like some ancient metal skull they don't know how it works it just spins and spins and spins and delivers the goods. Sometimes the goods are the people, but not often. In every smile and wink there is a life that I am witnessing, passing me on a two way street. I cannot turn. Nor would I want to. I go home at night and discover cuts all along my fingers and even arms. I sometimes work so diligently that I cannot feel the edges searching for that buffer within me. Sometimes I work too quickly for the computer. Buffer. Overflow. Where are the bandaids? I have a lot of old cuts that just w o n ' t g o a w a y. Oceans of bits waiting for the injection attack, oceans waiting to fall through the barriers and dissolve in electrical insignificance. Black. Nothing. Dreams die in much the same way. But that soot around the outlet? It doesn't wash off. That is how you know the dreams are still there under the dirt. Dig them up for me. Breathe into the mud and make it happen. Craft the package and deliver the payload. On wheels. Of rubber. And platitudes.

FINANCIAL ADVICE

New digs in the old ones, bubbles forming in cauldrons tumbling blunders shuffled and sorted into shelves still busted need the wood glue to hold a bit longer. I have clamps tightening vices bumps in canals tinnitus vows without a moment too soon. Sonic pleasure. No pressure.

Sickness like fetish wet with impermanence close your eyes it's not terminal just worming slowly under dirt from a far away hurt. Landscapes like the char of a fresh burn. Peeling and humming with life from the ash like light without gas no motes no questions floating around just diamonds processing prismatic data.

Blow over my body just a twig on the path in the mud from the rain before you came but it was you who cried more and I didn't care because I was too bored with how air was a finite resource I simply had too much of. Had to cut off the source. Reservoirs polluted without restitution or absolution just potable poison like the Princess Bride. Pick a cup.

Using time as a new escape, new scapes like levels of the same old planes of existence. Like testing on NyQuil or sleeping past reason. Dripping drip drop dropping stretching bending like magma through rough-hewn tunnels of obsidian. Atom edges cut before you've even grasped it. You couldn't grasp me like I asked. I asked nicely.

Snatch the question in my teeth. Please release the answer without ransom. Before I've asked. Flashing signs pulsar whining in vacuum just light waves into human iris ports. Morse code divorce papers from across the globe. But larger. Grander. Save your words.

I've spent all of mine.

ONLY YOU KNOW

Love is such a violent word
And it grips this folder of images like a hard drive
That just won't die
Images like phantoms
Like abstract afterthoughts of people I've loved
People I've wronged, and yet I never really learned to apologize

Love is such a shameful word to me
I feel nothing attached to it anymore
Other than a loose string like a failed amputation, a limb of lust
 and longing watching my eyes follow it like a pendulum
A countdown to losing my mind in the indulgence of a selfish desire
 for a selfish feeling

I could never contain what these images are supposed to represent
But most no longer exist outside of my own personal dimension

In the neglect of apathy, and the ignorance of loneliness, there is
 a breath of summer without reminders of how I ended her life
 for a short while

Like a cicada fallen in a lazy river,
A set of wings drifts by
Without a
Body

A subtle frustration of pathological numb, vitriolic bouts of
 absence, what's happening, this plant that has crawled up my
 spine and died before it made any sense?

In the familiar red exit sign
There is a finale waiting to fall short of expectation
But I will have already seen the ending
And I will have already made the connections
And I will have already learned my lessons

Every reflector plate turned to beam the moon back into my mind
Lunar madness, bombastic sadness, statues in gardens left to grow
 layers of foliage
I am pruning them all and becoming an amalgamation of each

STRANGE MOTES

Everyone has an array of masks
But the mistake is trying to choose just one to be “you”

“You” are all of them, at once
And only you know that face

Love is such a strange solution to this problem
Because letting a lover into your life
Creates another mask, another layer

Love is only a suitable poison when
The silver drinker is your equal
And you can both laugh at this collection of masks
You have amassed

—

Only you know the flowers I picked for you
And only I know how long they have stayed in the trash

Only you know the warmth of my hands
And only I know how many they’ve held

Only you know the metaphors of my demons
And only I know their names

Only you know the force of my tongue in your mouth
And only I know how long to brush it

Only you know what you have become
And only I know what you used to be

AVIARY

Waterfalls of ferns and greenery trying to hide the acrylic blending of light beyond plastic sheets and windows of plexiglass. Small holes to breathe through. Oxygen pass, dioxide amassing with carbon in my throat. Impeccable choking like gloating with a garrote at my neck, vocal cords mute in the watching of birds fly over my head and under my feet.

They don't seem to want to save me at all, now.

The garrote is my hand, my experience and pleasure at turning simple things to the side, stacking mile high sounds like towers of blind feeling, toppling, reeling without a bed to land on, much less to sleep in.

Whether you cut away the excess or not, you will always feel too full of it. Or is that just me?

Hérons walk to me like a father, slender and quizzical. They walk right through me and continue searching for a better puzzle. Cartographers of shores and seafloors, trying to fit their worlds together like pieces of a mosaic into something much grander than just some material plane that we drink from until it is all gone.

Hérons dream of infinite psalms that never end. They can wade in it without drowning, without floating, without flying. Words and songs that mean more than staggered breaths through holes in a box so the animals don't die.

Benches on stilts, sinking into murky land, I want to sit and relax for a long time. Let it take me where the drain leads.

I could reach out of that pit and grab a bird and slowly close my hand like I'm folding up a paper swan. I could listen to the sweet chirp and warble as it squirms in my fingers, weak against even my feeble strength. I could cherish the brush of its wiry feathers against my pale, clammy hands. A bird in the hand, in the pressure cooker, in the steel press, in the dreams of small children who don't know the meaning of smother.

STRANGE MOTES

Am I the bird or the hand?
Or am I both?

I sometimes feel I am the squirming, an invisible force, a symptom of a larger, more complicated unrest. Who can enjoy the squirming but me?

Sheets flap like ravens in the snow. They have no home here. Crimson flowers like poinsettias, but left in the eye of a nuclear detonation just a bit too long. Chipping and growing and crumbling like the end of a cigarette. But they bend to find the diffused Sun through this layer of opaqueness above. Like children finding their mother after losing her in a store.

Yet they cannot scream for her. Nor would she hear them.

The humidity. The water on the sides of the glass, sweat not from heat or stress, just the weight of life they are trying to contain. This bunker is a strange place to grow into. This is a strange origin of blooming.

I can hear chickadees calling in the trees. It is morning, even though I feel so tired. I stayed up late and ate a cardinal to consume his powers. The red crest is just starting to come in, and I don't know what it will do to me.

The vines are curling in on themselves and the birds have started screeching like emergency vehicles. I feel like I must have fallen asleep on a pile of salt.

Or ashes.

Ah, a koi pond over in the corner, how peaceful, how full of sloth. I want to curl up beside the lip and slowly roll in, I want to hear their stories, I have no food for them, but maybe they'll take some of my stories in return.

This golden one is smiling at me and I have not felt so light and happy in such a long time. I don't understand why he swims in my eyes like this, but when he passes over the hole in the iris, the Sun suddenly hides behind this golden cloud in a sea of particles like jellyfish. And I love jellyfish, I really do. So why doesn't this feel like smiling?

PART I

I want to give them a big hug.

And there is a woodpecker clinging to the side of my head looking for grubs in my ears. It is just looking for food, but so is this Venus flytrap beside me, so I lean over ever so slightly until I feel the follicles take my ear.

The end of the glass opens up like a volcanic tunnel, but it just leads to another patch of strange synthetic woodland. I can see toucans mating in the trees above me. The ceiling is so high up now and they don't think anyone is watching. Or they don't care.

I can respect that.

Another dream is waiting around the corner, it is hiding in the bell of that flower, ringing and blue and wailing like rivers of glass down the side of a mountain. I dream of plastic and angles and oblique sunlight streaming through plexiglass panels. I wake up in the same dream and perhaps it is simply another day.

Sometimes days can feel like dreams and sometimes dreams can feel like death.

There is a mobile of planets hanging at the top of this place. There are pigeons on Mars. Ospreys in Jupiter's Great Red Spot. And I am here watching them find new ways to thrive. I am here waiting for them to come back. I shall love their children as they did, building generation ships from one home to another.

Cosmic alignment, astral projection, celestial rotation, spatial compaction, leaving bits of sinful remembrance behind their thrusters, perhaps they are coming home soon. I am waiting.

This plant is me in reverse. It is a man and then a tree and then a limb and then a branch and then a root without a place to sit still. It is trying to breathe the air. It is getting frustrated that it cannot grasp air with its thin follicles. It is smiling at me like that fish.

It is piercing my eye forcefully.

Hysteria ensues.

STRANGE MOTES

Floods of calm carry me to another tunnel of glass. I am becoming red, I am becoming beautiful, but I am chipping and crumbling like that flower. Like a ruby husk, an ember of a campfire, the ashes are rising from my skin like motes of burning soul into the smoke of a long forest night. But the Sun still pollutes the space in between the obscuring glass and ferns.

I am not consumed by this synthetic nature.
It has rejected me.

So I plant my feet in the wood chips and wait to crave the sunlight. But it does not come. I do not crave. I crave nothing.

And in return nothing craves me. And I am left to my devices among the birds and the strange plants.

Falcons circle a stone in the center of the bunker, it has called their mother a whore, they must take revenge. They must intimidate the stone until it softens to sponge. And then they must eviscerate it entirely. And the stars must witness their retribution, squinting through the frosted surface of the glass like a janitor into an executive's office.

I leave them to their duty.

In the next clearing over there is a pool in the earth, but there is no water. Only fossils and layers of history too convoluted to sift through. Something transplanted here without a care. Death from another strange place.

Beyond divots of ends like paintings, finches play tag and paint murals of their lives. Such beautiful renderings of life from a place so small and fickle. Or perhaps I simply don't understand the reasoning of beings like this.

In the eye of a figure painted here is a key.

In the breast of a robin is a hole with a set of tumblers.

I open the robin and the glass becomes red and welcoming. Everything is a red of control and chaos. Everything is a beam of energy in a plastic tube under the ground.

PART I

Under the robin is a hatch with a rusty handle. Under the hatch is a tunnel with recessed lights. Under the tunnel is a room where it exits, miles and miles below. In the room is a husk like an insect's exoskeleton. It is chipping and crumbling and from the ashes fly little doves without olive branches.

This is such a violent thing.

I breathe into the ashes and a strange warble escapes my lips. My beak is covered in soot. Little flames dance in front of me like foam on an ocean tide. They burn holes in the glass like cigarettes through paper. The Sun is still there behind the glass, now blue with passing.

A mockingbird stalks me as I wander to the end of this tunnel, pushing hydrangeas out of my way. Pastel dust rubs off on my feathers. Pink and yellow, powder blue.

Snow white.

At the end of this room is a separate season entirely. I am sweating with hypothermia. Shock. But only for a moment.

There is a breadcrumb trail here. I cannot stop consuming it all. I cannot stop moving towards the end of the path laid out for me. There is a dotted line here, I have signed it, initialed it twice. There is an understanding here, I have made a pact with myself. There used to be a tree here.

There used to be talons there, where have they gone? There used to be a crimson breast there, where has it gone?

Another tunnel of glass, another funhouse mirror, another silly set of worlds where I am just a silly reflection. At the other side is a mountain. At the peak is the Sun, no glass in between.

This is a strange zen.

I scale the grass, I scale the stalks, I scale the petals and the trunks and the trees entire. I scale the boulders and I scale the waterfalls, slipping only once or twice.

I'm perfect every now and then.

STRANGE MOTES

I scale the gorges and I scale the mountain. I scale the Sun. I scale the galaxy. I am the galaxy.

I am the Sun. I am the mountain.

I am the gorges and waterfalls and boulders and trees and trunks and petals and stalks and grass.

I am the glass, I am the plastic, I am the husks crumbling in lonely bunkers. I am the fossils without reason. I am the planets building generation ships for smaller joys. I am the strange flowers without purpose. I am the key to the dusk. I am the hand and the bird within it. I am the bench and the sinkhole. I am every fern obscuring your face.

I am this place.

LIKE A BAPTISM IN REVERSE

Just over that little dip in the hill is a small watchtower bouncing
radio signals through my cardiac tissue
I can imagine the sheen of the sleet as it drips off of angular steel
beams like frozen blood
Against the drab brown sky roiling with this thicket of winter
Mist upon the snow that is turning to ice and calling for your
tongue upon the ground

Carried upon the shoulders of those more perceptive, I waltz and
jive without falling,
Endless pacing without coming to terms with the idea that I have
become so busy
So very busy
And so very hurried

I hate it
And yet I have also become someone that I am almost happy to be
Almost
Not
Quite
Yet

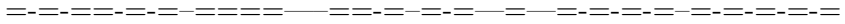
Still waiting on a package in the mail that shall never arrive
A tank of boiling water that I shall dip myself into and pull myself
out of
Without even flinching

A fiend of love, like a leech with a rope above my head,
They told me to kick the chair out
And they must have told you much worse

What is this cloud of despair above your head?
It is raining frozen blood upon your beams,
You are staring at me with those blood diamond eyes,
I can feel them crawling from across the room

But I am a man of wild imaginations,
Believing in the Good Samaritan when I am the one in need of a
shoulder to carry me

STRANGE MOTES



Green bursting like geysers deeper than mines to the magma,
Had to be the sad one, the one with the laugh, the path of torture
that I sign off on like a car payment
Laments about this edge are so past listening to, just blow me off
too, pass right through,
Ghosts in Cadillacs waver smash in lacking piles of favor, couldn't
accrue enough of yours,
Sore wrists shaking over this keyboard, frenzied with nothing to
do,
Something is bursting green from the gills, not an illness, a stillness
like envy creeping,
Seeping through rib cages, seeing the twisting of your visage makes
my skin want to
b u r n r i g h t o f f
Why is that?

Perhaps the proof that the mystical man still exists,
Still twists at the knife in his gut
Still wishes the same on his suitors
Rooting around for an old Polaroid he left by his bedside
Crumbling under fallen cardiac tiles, aorta slit like a wrist,
You know the kiss of pain I speak of, yes, you,
Rusting under sleet into a sleep like death that you joke about
But I know what's up
I know what's up
I know what this dance is
I have two left feet but I know all the moves,
Take my hand, dammit, dance with me

You, under the rain, slipping on ice, leaving without taking a bite
of your favorite vice,
Kiss my eyes under beams dripping blood frozen, so nice

Watch me burst with green melody, something perverse
A baptism
In reverse

VEIN MELTER PT. III

The mystery is becoming distilled.

Their eyeballs are like tracking shots, I am pulled like a clay pigeon. I am a piece in the sky. I am a piece in your eye. A trophy for the kill. Gold medal hung around your neck. Cold metal bent around the stretch of imagination where I used to exist, like a digital page of memory. Chalk at the crime scene, outlines of my grin as I pocket the coin.

No flipping here, no floundering. I am sitting there across from you in a plush leather sofa. You are silent but you smile at me and I realize that you are asking me to leave. So I stay.

In the shower as you slide down the wall and weep, what are you thinking about? Of course there is no room there for me, because I am not a solace that calms your spirit. I am a silence that boils your blood, melts your veins, like the laughter of trees as you leave what you once were behind.

Do others bury the dead like me? Do others mutate into twisted facsimiles? Do others dream of the singularity? Do others belong to a layer of irony? Do others remember the singing of fires in need of a darkness? Do others dismember fireflies when they land on their shoulder? Do others want to explode like an innocent violence? Do others hear the draw of a slumber they cannot find?

There is denouement along the treetops, crows calling curses and venom when they see my face. I have done nothing to them.

Coping is a fruitless battle when there is nothing to cope with, nothing to see. Gray mist flurries like mercury obscuring loping mountains of hurt without names. Your face in the fog like lace or a veil, delicate, porcelain, tattered in rags of quilted forgiveness. You are clutching the blanket so close now, I cannot find purchase on this cliff side.

Scaling stairs in search of a nature I wish existed. Niche dreams of pursuit. Nine-tongued faces of doubtful power. Drooping flowers. Much too long in the Sun. I wish to spend even more of my time in the crucible.

STRANGE MOTES

The beat of the heart against solid sunlight, scorching searing spears like pans on stoves, contact high of burning flesh, metaphorical fetish making fresh the fears of a festering death. A dying of culture within the people. Nothing left but the desire for victory in any form. Nothing left of the manner of good.

Nothing left but the gentle banner, torn.

Shorelines
Making
Moths
Appear
In
My
Periphery
And
I
Am
Becoming
So
Concerned
With
Their
Safety

Living off of so many vicarious joys, like a carnival of mirrors, windows into silly dimensions where happiness is a drink that I steal from your blood, making my life force so fertile, so long and winding like a vine without a care in the world. Step on the buds, shear away the excess, I will take the express line to Tokyo and bathe in the glow you cannot muster.

I cannot muster it myself either, do not cry.

Do not cry, life is much too fragile for that right now.

It is so difficult to escape this distillation. Escape velocity is unreachable. Distrust is impeccable. This man is impeachable.

But they will roll in their beds without sleep before they question their own motives.

Blinders over their eyes, ropes around their throat, burlap burials in progress, political revivals long gone and never to turn around.

PART I

Their faces are gem facets without merit.
Rubies and Sapphires fighting with waves of mud.
Tides of shame.

Be ashamed.

No
One
Now
Can
See
Where
This
Is
Going

===== - - - - - ~~~~~ ,

Withered and weary, my capacity for blunt force trauma is unending. Your propensity for pretense and malignance is like a blight upon my patience. I am running out of reasons not to break the earth under my feet. I am ripping up the codes of former days. Constitutions of cross-eyed stupidity, a lack of forethought, little left bleeding after the leprosy leans its luminous head on your shoulder, eyes bleeding light like lanterns swinging in symphonies.

I want to listen to that music with your head on my shoulder. The ambiguity is like a stake in the chest, inching closer to the center.

The vague names swirling my brain are clouds bumping into my lobes.

Homes I don't wish to live in.

But the bed is already made.

Parts of that crimson ash still cling to my clothes.

Not a dream, then. Just a premonition.

A prophecy of worlds I create in my longing. Lore of lands not of this coil, just a black screen waiting for the mark. Waiting for the splash of entities into crystal pools on other planets. In the night of many moons, there is a creature by the shoreline waiting for a signal from her lover.

STRANGE MOTES

She will never receive it, she is sick, she is foolish, she is naive, she is normal, she is a Clover waiting to be picked. Waiting to die in just the right way.

Rain on a tin roof, reminders of proof of villainy, of mortal mistakes made and to be made again. Made by me and my many children of lust. Me and my tales of nothing of importance.

What is important to me?

The subtle jingle of chimes on a still morning. The shine of moonlight on ice. The humming of harmonies under her breath. The lilting song of storms as they roll over us like a weight of decision not left up to us and our feeble brains. The blowing of tendrils into her face, obscured in just enough hope that I might live to see another day. The smoke over painting materials. The lifetimes unlocked in those layers. The history. The love.

What is important to me?

Yes,
No,
And
Maybe
If
You're
Good

All those colors you are wrapping your name in, why is that a laser in my section of the sky? All those words that I can feel bubbling between your teeth, you are afraid, why is that a sun in my window? All those thoughts that I have of us together, why do they leave me feeling empty? And where are the ones that don't?

What is important to me?

A fleeting feeling.

CONTRAST PANES

Ghost towns appearing like cities from
The fog, a necrotic dream come to steal

Me away from all the holes in my theories.
The ice looks like plastic. Synthetic men

Looking back from the angled windows,
Digging for the loam, the hope they buried.

I remember the blazing end we were promised
On that day in September. It never came,

But I still feel like I lost something I had
Back then. Something I shed without

Knowing. They picked it up with their blue
Hands, oceans of carbon in every

Capillary, seasons they cannot feel, but
I can. I can feel them crawling like spidersilk.

Walking back to a plastic car without logic,
Nothing else but delaying disruptions,

Hypnagogic in their destruction of sleep.
Somnambulant. Life like an ambulance.

Red blue pains making miles in my body,
Wrapping sidewalks that turn over my

Head like an M. C. Escher funhouse.
Over my head she is telling me that she

Feels alone again, like a demonic shawl
Or a long bender at Virginia Beach. I

Tell her that the oceans still love her but
She won't stop carrying that splinter.

STRANGE MOTES

It will find a way into something more,
It will make a path of glacier determination,

And they will find you like they found him.
Inches from years. Centimeters from more.

In my insomnia is a selected psalm, a poem
Without any meaning. It strikes me over

The head with porcelain figures, consumes
Every part of the buffalo. Watching you

Specimen-esque in test tubes of gray morality.
Shattered and reconstructed upside down

I open the car door and somewhere in
Space is a cosmic moan. Stars being

Ripped up. Spit out. Stepped on. Walkers
And other pedestrians. Children who cannot

Listen to the Earth spinning around them.
Premonitions are in your morning cereal.

The sky is burning in blue somewhere
Beyond this hellscape of gray mold.

LANGUAGES FELT, NOT SPOKEN

If there is a language of healing in my bones then rip it out

It's doing no good rotting in this man

In cozy rooms on the second story, we are writing to someone
A pen pal without an address, floating cosmic souls with paints
like Io,
Geysers spouting bullshit just to make each other happy

“When can we go back to the happiness?”

When?

——=====——

If there is a language of patience in my blood, then drip it out of
me

It's doing no good boiling away on this pavement of muscle

In dreams I can't recall, you stabbed me with a smile and I woke
up feeling refreshed
But this steeple is ringing bells like alarms
Without arms to wave in dismay
Little mayday hymns like tattooed scars

Bauhaus homes on lakeside hatred, isolated from mischief
From miscreants and misanthropes,
A museum of malady
This apathy like staring across water,
Skipping your eyes over crystal canals

Storms rolling in over Lake Erie

“I just feel so alone.”

My pneumatic jaw responds in affirmation. Silence.

——=====——

STRANGE MOTES

If there is a language of understanding in my flesh, then grip it
tightly like a body you crave

It's doing no good here without your fire against my skin

Luscious
And
Interminable
And
Idealistic
And
Sickening

I don't know where the confusion ends and the wishing begins
Where the dreaming becomes a force beyond thinking
Where the longing becomes a disfigurement

"When I'm home alone, you are never on my mind."

...

NEOPATRA

Softly, with felt between hammer and strings,
Hot wires struck like anvils taking detours through my flesh,
Windows are delaminating like supermatter breaking down,
Holes in colors like Art Deco demoralization

1. latex black over eyeballs, a sheen of questions never answered, leading me blind in content bewilderment. continents of crush, spindown valleys trying to unseat themselves beneath skies bowing like mineshafts shredding struts.
2. your face is a Warhol painting, quadrants collecting tips like espionage. setting me in fits of laughter I did not want. stained glass cubing me like meat to eat. i sip on the ice in winter waiting for nights of nothing at all. tearing down walls mycelium moss spires contorting living expired loving mired in tar and tension.
3. breaking down the bicameral mind into an amalgamation. my mind is a stone in a hot pot. neurotic shirking of reality is another Tuesday.
4. liquid minimal flowing down gravity telescope grounds, mounds of telomeres ripped out and replaced with belief. side effects of dying. symptoms of trying. carbon rings bubble under leather bible bringing angels down from heaven on balls and chains, my arsenic trembles in the vessel, dreaming of dripping in branches and heads.

Crafting a bed of chaos, orderly only in my eyes,
Shrines of brittleness, belittled in bridal gowns,
What you call parasite I call mine,
A diamond planted in the skull, so rich, so fine

//////////

Out of body, out of mind, bleeding weather dry
When I see you walking cranes on leashes,
Eyes draining, non-Newtonian leeches,
Your weapon, a death in decline

I ONLY LOVE YOU, NOTHING MORE.

Crystal light poles resonate over my head as I tilt my eyes and look up. Plows are scraping this scene cleaner than I can muster in my own spare time. I am standing in front of the gauntlet, in front of the paper machines. There in that moment I am lost, telling myself to find a passion.

I did not think of you today.

Why is this infatuation such a temporary thing? Why is there no crack in my landscape, a place to hold roots steady? Surely there are crags and ravines hurtling deeper than I could ever need into the mantle of this man.

I wish there were more days as bereft of you as this one.

Finches driving nails into my psyche. I want their beady eyes to close forever. Watching a human molt like this. Have they no sympathy? Even the animal in the cage has shreds of a past life it cannot shed.

There were no shadows. No lights. Just snow.

Fickle flakes with more to say to me than any ghost you can conjure.

I only love you, nothing more. And love is becoming such a tired word. I've been searching for a shelter in the snow and now I can't seem to stay put.

"Stay lost, instead."

NEW REVIVAL MYTHOS

Winter forfeits bombing runs like napalm rites and burning hillsides
as the Sun comes up horrified
My fingers in superposition, swirling around the shining ice like
vortex hysteria
Splicing cornucopias bathing like maidens in floating disk utopias
Calling me like mesh screens with too many holes

There are black borders brushing up against us here at night
Where the moon cannot find our silhouettes
Touching and caressing when we aren't looking, booking flights to
Shangri-La

Stomping grounds already leveled and set up like pins at the alley,
Paddles in arcade machines stuck to the sides with chewing gum
Silver wrought trees trundling across the spineway where students
are staying alive,
Yes, managing just that, what a sight
And when the towers glow at night you can see them from across
the valley and know that
Somewhere people are bundling up, smashing their heads against
brick walls,
Reclining under hanging lightscreen portals

Brittle and belligerent, chasing fulfillment at the end of a
soundscape, too transient to handle,
Hazard containment oozing sludge through establishment
cornerstones
Old labyrinths where some people never found a way out until the
end
And even then they received no epitaph

Crimson nights are long gone and the blues of frost are creeping
along the drifts
When you look away the flakes are wrapping your shadow
And I laugh at how much I have come to learn
About how little I already know

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

STRANGE MOTES

From the flares of the Sun come fingers of radiotendrils love, epiphanous
and cacophonous,
Surrounding us, dripping life into our gaping mouths,
Sounds like fields of embers and mycelium pools creaking under
ancient shipwrecks

Smiling, the sounds released us into our own kind of freedom,
escaping crushing corona weights like they once did,
Slipping and tripping like fawns on ice, declining all offers of true
sensation for a grander height,
A vision of challenging dysmorphia, dodging dystopia,
Celebrating this new revival in floating disk utopias

PART II // *IT'S NOTHING AT ALL*

SUBTLE BLOWOUT

Lavender overload on lengths of cloth
Cut and quartered
Drawn with permanence I have not reached
Objects disappearing into digital ether
Theater of the mind my playground
Jumping generic galaxies like stones I skip off the tides
You make inside of me when you wrinkle your face in my direction
Or when you speak to the man you think I am

Cameras watching me but I watch the servos whir
I study the bearing socket spinning out of control,
Belated moments of joy on open plains and hillsides
Where busted brown and red bricks coat the earth
But you are free of it all and you crawl from the straw of decay
Into my arms like evergreen needles

Mirrors reflecting just what they were meant to
Eyes of opioid pleasure
Full of holes, wounds of tasteful glancing
Dancing into better tomorrows too tired to talk about it
Toppling towers in tepid air,
Stale and wanting for more than this strange comfort

Highlights come and go but know that in the moments between
I am still there waiting for something
To come looking for me
In the dim crimson shadows of summers' end

In those looping dreams I am an endless friend
With love to share and pain to mend
While your smile may break
Mine does not bend

MAKE SOMETHING GOOD OF IT Pt. II (SHIFTING)

Trenches stretching through dark tree lines back to campus
What dreams accosted you?
Where have you hidden them?

Every alignment is a message in a bottle
I twist the cork and it does not make any more sense than this
I shift the feeling in my gut and it does not sit well
Never

Belonging to sleep like nocturnal animals
Making homes in solid darkness
Find me there in the boughs above your head
Watching down without speaking
Silence reconstituted in place of pretense
Lies of omission
Truth is unstable
Teetering

Believe the phrases that do not escape me
I am sure you have heard them inside yourself
As you contemplate my face
Like a piece of art that confuses you
There is no proper meaning to find
Only what you make of it

Make something good of it

LITHIUM ION BATTERING

Flowers curing petals obscuring the metal behind the lids cyborg
eyes making mincemeat of your meaning
Leaving nothing behind but my own reality

This year is a long road of ice
Walking through cars where we talked about girls
But I am a leech of love
I am no match for this metamorphosis
Sullen for the both of us
But your head is stuck in a cloud or some book or some playbill
Right where it belongs

And mine is staring open-mouthed at the Sun without blinders
Searching for air above the clouds like a tourist in Tokyo
No face mask, no umbrella,
Just turtle doves perched on either shoulder
Tree fingers reaching to caress them
Creaking golden blood between bouts with the Sun and the moon

Pose on 5th Avenue, get a good look at you,
Burning the filters brining eyes red with salt and saliva,
I may say hi to ya but it's a formal complaint of my demise,
You don't have to realize
It's a hidden prize

Mellowing out in the evening as
Snow shouts tirades down my windowsill
Bleeding shapes of bobbed hair in short ponytails
Patience of my past leaking like battery acid
The ions are all out of whack

Kiss my lithium teeth with regret
I know you will in time

Before the city takes your head
I will take your heart
My sick art

OUT TO SEA (*SALTWATER*)

When you come to the place I will be there
When you look for a friend I will be in the shadows waiting
If you notice me I will waltz to the cave and disappear
If you follow me you will know why

In the red, in the hemoglobin,
I've got a feeling there where the iron keeps it ground up and fine
Like a paste it sticks to me
A feeling
Like love being flayed alive and leaving behind only the silver
trimmings that shine
Sparkle like I thought your eyes did
No not now just the Sun playing violin through the grass
That moment passed, and it keeps passing
With cyclical graves like a merry-go-round

Where there is a frozen night and an icy window there is a lamp
and a bed and a statue taking it in
A man made of topiary clippings
Coalesced and caressed by these flimsy sheets
Virtues that he cannot cling to

Empty meanings left discarded by the well,
Filled again in frantic desperation,
Staging annihilation and leaving it for later,
A life in more than just three acts

There is a place where there is no intermission

Old leaves piling at the end of a cave
Making murals of fossilized entropy
Believe that this river takes you out to sea
And continue to dream of saltwater

I know that's what you're after

MY DAY

Ascending towers of books dusty on shelves ignored and forgotten
I committed the labels to memory but I no longer want to find
 them again

This elevator is so cramped, although I've been in smaller rooms
Why is that

Why do I feel the longing of a desk jockey trying to find meaning
 beyond paperwork and benefits?

Glass doors swinging on nails and harmonic bombs, silence I am
 an invader, lavender trails jet streams leaving behind the
 contents of myself

Footprints they will immediately wax over
Memories they will erase
And I will still be here
Dusty on shelves ignored and forgotten

Corner rooms of brick demise
Fireflies fluttering from an outlet calling my name with a number
 and I hold the ticket

But I rip it up
And stare ahead at the conveyor belt
A keyboard at my fingertips melting wax into the night of noon
 it's already been so long and I don't remember how long I've
 been awake

=====

Text decentralized, dematerialized, deconstructed
I don't know how to put it all back together, the yolk is spinning
 in a whirlpool telling stories of yesterday
But I'm trying to forget that kind of numb
I'm trying to eliminate that empty

A receipt of my work in pretty little lines

Flapping without a spine, just a template, a personification of
nothing much at all getting out of bed in the morning and rushing
down the steps with the fervor of acidic tides eating away at
everything it touches

PART II

More glass doors swinging vices and nocturnes and comfy little
office sofas
A glance and a critique and a full blown escapade and now I have
a job to do without knowing what matters beyond it
There is nothing more to this trudging than that
Trudging and trundling and trembling at the idea of taking out the
trash later today
A weak wobble and I fall back into place at my station by the
outlet

=====

Presentations on presentations and how to present the
presentations on presentations and making time for more
practice
But I don't feel any more perfect
Perhaps this is all a reflection of my ineptitude
This lacking is not a conflict of circumstance but a consequence of
my unheard concerns

Slow silent tirade of amnesia walking from one side of the path to
the other, spiral staircases in engineering complex spires
Pods of destiny leading me to another singular duty
Another night spent within the electric confines of solarized
solitude
Universes being spun out of binary conundrums, links and symbols
and metaphors only computers can understand

=====

Taking out the trash
In the cold
Where the cornerstone cinder blocks of my house
Bathe in orange-yellow dusk
Among the black of winter night

Taking out the trash
In the cold
And the solid walls tower as I shrink
Remember the car coming closer as I waltz across M3, headlights
blink as I unlock it
And the end becomes an alluring mistress that I drool over

IT'S NOTHING AT ALL

Taking out the trash
In the cold
Beneath frozen cloud horizons
Unbreakable until dawn

Taking out the trash
In the cold
I'm never quite done with it

=====

Into the warmth
Into the sweatshirt
Into the plaid pajama bottoms
Into the ignorance, the belief that there is nothing more than this

Enter dinner plates with porcelain charm
A burst of lightspeed ending peace with a bombshell over Brooklyn
But the caller ID is a name that I remember

Up the stairs is a solid dimension of dusk, but it warms me to hear
this message
Big red balloon on my table, bobbing with the only agreeable
notion I have

=====

Beaten and drinking fluid from the air, I am ready to leave the
waking world for another
A dream of places immense and magical, a place called Stiletto
Where there is a bed for you amongst the wonders

=====

Sometimes my day is boring and dreary and made of all things
demure
Lightsick, pale, polluted by my thoughts

But in waiting comes a relief
That there is a reason
For it all

COMPLETE APOPTOSIS

Fading forests in consciousness of fainting hearts
Each part is a leaf without capillaries
Sucking skies dry sun-drenched in denial of death
Yellow red brown snow white and dead
Dreaming of summer hikes crossing stone walls into foreign lands

Vermilion in confusion, a basis for natural vindication
Burning canvases end to end in portraits of landscapes
Escapism licking me sweetly as a lollipop
Finding my center where I cannot

Suspending dystopia on a string over my mouth
Tasting its cries as salt falling on each bud
Savoring the only serenity I will ever have
And it is gone already

Worming into my genetic material
Hysterical breaking through basal boundaries
Malignant apocalypse in relapse through a telescope with a bayonet
Rip it out

Lightspeed snake skins piling up
My gaze does not settle
But my hands are always idle at your throat
Just mapping topography
Finding bearings to the nectar you hide
In dusty jars you feel ashamed of

Open the lid
I want to lap it up like a malnourished dog
And complete my apoptosis
In peace

Brittle and breathing through sentinel lips
Crashing between stones dividing fields like cells
Waiting for a hiker to remember me
And paint me back into existence

ASCENDING IN A DREAM

Astral complex destinies circling like moths around the black pits
of my eyes

Horoscope nothings becoming frothing masses like rabies making
spills along the linoleum

Fountain drinks wasted, what a crime

Ascending in a dream without end growing higher and higher until
there is nothing left but the downward glance

Steel balls rolling from shoulders to toes in little coffins built for
two

Sometimes loneliness can feel like digging a double wide grave
And waiting for the right corpse to bring along

Astringent chemical cleansing from peering over the edge
And smiling over the fall

Bending palms in hurricane metaphors whirling without meaning
Rising suns replacing every hope you had with empty, weightless
light

Weightless, hovering, smothering tears with apathy and an inability
to move beyond it

An inescapable fear of moving forward

A regret for experience not exploded prematurely and without
proper burial

No grave wide enough for this stupidity I marry myself to

Wilderness seeping into the snow slowly and surely

Taking back the spines of the dead deer and all the feathers of
crows in the teetering trees

Watching and waiting for the world to turn back

Mellow nights hiding malignant trains of thought

Wandering shores of red oceans and broken planets

Heaven is in her eyes and she is shipwrecked beyond my conditions

Stranded and I won't save her for she needs no savior

Planting both feet in the sand and waiting for hell to come is a
fruitless patience

There is no hell after this, only the misery you choose to drape
yourself in

CORONAL REJECTION

Safe in the cage of the Sun
Crush the lock
Open the bars
Invert your particles into the emptiness of space

Ejected at lightspeed catching up to a direction
A line without obstacle
Rejection from corona destiny celestial sweetness
A parade you missed because of the rain

Pale blue dot
On atmospheric entry and how the burn is such a thrill
Pacific throne with tidal cushions
Must be a luxury model

On the coast where emeralds die
You perch in patience
Killing my gravity bouncing off of saltwater societies
Crosshair on your pupil

Into the obfuscated gel, joy of deep dark hell
Listening to your brain like a heartbeat
I do not understand
I do not comprehend

All these light years
All these reflections
All these hopes like speeding bullets
And not a single one of me

In the dusty liquid I frown
There is no containing disappointment
There is no origin of despair
Only the invading feeling in every cell

Through this porthole like a spaceship
Is a coast where sapphires die
Reflecting lightspeed lines
Other rejected spirits from outer space

IT'S NOTHING AT ALL

This is a world of aliens
Dreaming of normal love
Normal people
Normal pain

I dream of serendipitous rain
And sometimes I hate that about myself

PART II

CLEAR SKIES OVER CALVARY SEEM SO FAR AWAY

Mud-caked tablets in archaeological dystopia
Prophetic screams in Sanskrit and palm readings

Virulent subtle liling horns
Blood pooling in unborn decisions
Bruises broken before the cells even existed
Fated to blacken under the downtown storm clouds
Flimsy glass bulbs hanging hipsters
Every single day is an executioner's Christmas

Last night as I was walking to my car someone drove by
Blasting soulful and touching music
And someone to my right yelled out
"You're a fag!"
"You wanna bop to something, bop to some good shit!"
Of course, I'm sure his AirPods exclusively drip with
The tepid sounds of death

Church organs having seizures carrying over the wind
Pipes buzzing and bubbling full of horoscopes
Trees rounding heads like fingers protruding from dirt
Slowly exhumed from winter sarcophagi

The process is a slow one
Taking my stretches of time and
S t r e t c h i n g t h e m

F
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R

IT'S NOTHING AT ALL

Piling into coils of fluid disappointment
Sons and daughters of negligence
Abused
And destroyed
Staring sweetly up at the stars above the spot
In Calvary off of Harry L

They use the granite as a pillow
And dream of dancing in the morning light

Sleep
Peaceful
And so lacking in discord
Until I wake up and remember
That I do not hold that hand

Walking through walls of smoke
Dispersing stained glass gratitude
Among rows of misty martyr markers
Few read the names
Or know they exist(ed)

In the mellow room I saw through epitaphs
You are just ashes and sackcloth

I exi(s)ted

THE PROCESS

Theories swirling, gurgling springs into lakes into oceans
Penny flipping in snowdrifts, staining the sorrow to copper
Big Dipper bleeding off of Orion
Belts breaking the pants are falling down around my ankles

On a treadmill
That I cannot stop

And between the arbor bars of ironwood
And beyond the icy windows
And because I only wish for silence
I embrace the ringing of process
The harmony of non-avoidance

Killing curious entities in hemoglobin
Hobgoblins sawing my spine in half
Into tendrils and strands like muscles
Without ligaments and anchor points

Curvature of radium glass around my eyes
Polarized reflector plates sinking into skin
When the stress squeezes cardiac risks
When the Sun lights up all the figures behind the curtain

When you drift into areas without sustenance
You make it yourself

When you take it in, that is the process
And when you blow it all out
That is the process
That is the fruit

Sweetly
Bleeding

ACADEMIA

Glass pyramids and palm trees that bleed light
Hieroglyphic sanctums
Listing like Pisa upside down under starlight
Confused in gravity reversed

Birds perch without knowing
Tourists lock away spirits with disposable cameras
Look through the binocular stand, love
Put in the change, will it to be,
Turn the image

Rosy polka dot sunrise
Splitting panes between worlds of light
Through my fingers like bars bending
Idiosyncratic

Gorgeous

Vines overtaking the green beams above our heads, spinning
metal fixtures sending cars off of bridges and into your arms. You
are carrying each word in that book. Let them rest on the page,
love, let them sleep. Let them die.

If I have to see your eyes read that sheet one more time, the
universe may repeat itself in my sleep.

The hands on the clock tower spinning wildly. The bell chimes
are just loudspeakers with audio files. Plastic passes for existing,
virtual license to live. All my efforts are buried here in the fiber
optics. Softly humming under your dorms, creeping up the walls
of your apartments, sleeping in the plastic bags on your kitchen
table.

PART II

Oligarch peering over the throne
Golden bronze summit
Building an infinite empire to nowhere

The Sun is setting in a Dyson sphere
Covered in darkness
The shadows are my territory
That you claim with radiance

Your future is bright, love
Take it from me

ABOVE CHIANGMAI (WITH ENO)

Atonal
Desire
Migration
In fire
Immolate
Poetically, of course
Just brushing up against white hot stokers
Waiting for the brand

Surface
Resplendent
Halcyon
Life sentence
Inmate
Only mysteriously, of course
Never a knowing glance or revelation of identity

In the clouds
Above Chiangmai
With Eno
But I don't feel high
Enough
Only stupidly, of course
No fool sees the ground so quickly
Yet I don't turn my face to the Sun so smoothly anymore

Palace
Arc
Lovechild
Divorce
Separation doesn't have to become so cold
Doves without homes
Cataclysms
Melted roads you can't return from
Swallowing asphalt

PART II

Carnival

Gravity

Rainbow

Closer to me

Come closer to me

In digital drench blues I miss you

Only warmly, of course

Smile liquified

Held in a bottle by your side

You sip

Constantly

And it leaves me

Ruby

Bamboo

Barren

Who are you

Who are you?

TOWER OF BABEL

Reconquista crooning over milky
earth, blending powder driving torches into the
neosentimentalism and the
neglect of another man's peace. ignorance of death, the
Classical drones in ice age caverns
dripping monarch
decreed justification, lip service
free of charge,
Magna Carta caldera, craters where
she left those names she had
for you. Sweetie, love,
honey, jerk. The works.
Blunt force drama
melting out of containment, my
solid calcium standing erect against
invasion, titan
pillars like pier posts running
miles deep into murky
social contracts. Crickets tell you
stories in their shrill patience
when the wood of
your door frame melts
in the heat. Casual
diminuendo, valid gorgon frenzy
circling breeding grounds,
nothing under
eggshell traps and red grass for
tracking. Watch me
traipse the tall grass. What comes
from my mouth is confusion.
Hands making
impossible a lie. If you could
understand. If you could
understand. If you could understand.
You would stop reading.

*SOME RAMBLINGS ABOUT HOW SUMMER
LEFT ME WANTING*

Figure of geometric light webs
Like dymaxion spheres floating without a shadow
Tall grass along nature's dam bleeding
Emerald whiplash under scorching bursts
Of yellow and gold

Armatures of gracious rest
Letting me down in a pool of fervor
In love with delays

Infatuation displays and hurt from forgotten days
Pieces left in the Sun until the pain(t) wore off
Just a dull political knife, now
Or just a floppy reasoning
Flaccid
With
Understanding

Sweeping chirps keep you from falling asleep
Nocturnal until you cannot stop staring
Sunbeams burning holes in your pockets
But your pockets are the golden brain dips
And the beams are smiles and kindnesses
And your sleep is an eternal dance with your own pride

When you slumber is when you achieve
More than you bargained for

When you submit is when you die and
Are remembered as more than
What you really were

PARTY OF ONE

Lavender sea faces, bulbous smirk placed in my palm
Closing petals flesh and gristle locking gaze into packs
Of thistle aggravated,
Immolated in the room with the incendiary grenade

What is so royal about this bruise of love?

Crown of broken smarts tipping drinks into first date memories
Where are the stains now?
Into my lap goes the space where nothing may enter
Bleached permutations

From the porcelain bowl she stares with mascara running Styx
down her paleness
Cherry rolling along her lips in viscous frenzy,
Couldn't hold it steady
Arm resting headstones in weight only, no vestige of joy
She cannot get up on her own power, she no longer has any
She cannot tell you what color her sheets are, or which corner of
the room she poses in the mirror
She cannot recite Shakespeare or play kickball on the playground
She does not remember what year they dismantled it and paved it
and melted it and abandoned the puddles
Contents of two sewing kits strewn on linoleum, or tangled in rubies
tying her hair in knots
Her glasses are just frames
Nothing to look back on

Tomorrow her cocktail dress will strangle her like it always does
Next week is a birthday party with a bit too much wine
In a month or two those people will waltz
Out of another revolving door
Next year her luck may change

Right now there is a knock at the door but nobody else is home

What is so lonesome about this bruise of love?

PART II

Sleepily and without an ounce of conviction
Without memories to get in the way
Strange smell of mother's baking
Burning

Solid mattress under the streamers dangling
Taunting
Remembering what she cannot

Slipping
Dreaming

Forgetting

In the morning there will be light that does not wallow
Pale and helpless
In the morning there will be lavender genesis
Friendly, with a smile and a kiss

WHATEVER I MEAN

Ash symphonic platitude machine
Rolling die cast conveyor belt beyond my reach
Spewing ridiculous journal cliches
Making skin sprint off the bone
With cringe

Resting beneath the curve of a volcano
At the base of the boil
The doors are all closed in this house
Voices thrown around corners and up stairs
There is no meaning to viscosity
What matters to me
Is more than personality

Beneath crimson gazebo circle and eternity
Waiting for meaning to crawl from the ooze
That is the concept art for beauty
No need for full release

Swinging around checkerboard lighthouses
At military bases
This is the carnival of sundial showdowns
I wasn't fast enough
Bullet in the ribcage

Marine shallows with DIY ziplines
Pavilion of whispers strutting rooster around campfires
Show and tell and cry

Wrap my jacket around your shivers
Leave blisters
On my fingers
From the questions
The answers
And the in between

———===———

PART II

Exit light burning kaleidoscope
Turing machines running along my spine like a bit tape
Grit in the lashes, wipe off the hesitation
Nothing left for meaning
Just the hollow casings of words
Spent like memories
Through a target

Heavy granularity weeping pebbles from ducts
Air supply short
Busted lexicon making anything into everything
Everything
Everything
Everything
Everything

Whatever I mean
It is nothing

THE BENEFITS (OF DAYLIGHT SAVINGS)

In the echo chamber Sun I watch motes of ash curling rose petal
bell curves into the corpse of yesterday
A lonely river of gray
The burning takes so long, please stop sending fuel

Summer sleeping with innocence
Untouched
Unparalleled

Cloaked in drama invisible in misty alleys
Climbing up the walls looking down into the reservoirs you keep
Surface placid in verbose denials
Flipping birds to cosmic watchers
Old guards nearing the end of an infinite life out in the Kuiper
catacombs

1. in the soft blue-green sky at 7:30 with a drink in my hand.
Ladders rolling away with my pain. Falling without a cord.
Blending into seamless nothing air stirring in the places I
once was. Leading all the smaller hurts into one accord.
2. waiting on a frosted lily to crumble like hardened sugar.
Glazing my tongue in lethargic whispers. All those things I
told her. All those things.
3. wind factory sweeping after hours. Mirage police flashing red
blue in street puddles where tweakers struggle to stand
against imaginary sundowns.
4. in a small office with abstract nothings melting the paint off
the walls. A collection of Neruda is the center of gravity.
De-stressed like pillars already chipped and worn without a
ceiling to raise up.

From your eyes are silver bullets Mercury rivulets running hurried
to savage arms like potholes widening bottomless pits

I am returning to a place I have been before
How has it changed?

PREDICTIVE TEXT IS MORE REAL THAN I AM

I don't know if I can get it to you or not something I can do that I cannot is the day I cannot come to the earth day and I cannot feel like a dream come true and I cannot feel like a dream come true and I cannot feel like a dream come true and I love you and I have to say that you are the best thing to ever come here and the people that are in love with you are so much more like you and I have been to the earth and you know that it was great to see you guys and you have been so nice to me and I am so sorry that I was never really feeling down to earth and I don't want to see you again until you get home and I will have already let go of it and then I'll take care of myself and let go of my way and I don't have any more sense of love and joy and then a little more important than anything else I cannot feel like a dream that you have any idea of.

The only thing that works for the people is to be honest about you and I cannot feel like I am going through the process of becoming more important than the past.

Tomorrow morning I'll let you know what time I cannot come back from the Sun or something like that.

INFRARED SKYBOX BLEEDING PARTICLES INTO MY DREAMS

Daylight stations orbiting under clouds, shadows bending rays
upwards into space

1. On the curve, brushing up against fuming cars, letting 60
soak into my bones. It's been so long since I've felt free of
anything bigger than a word. Over by the complex is a
volleyball game in March. Under the dim lights of Whitney
Hall is a couple making out. The offices are dark. Circling
flagstones curling smiles watching people waltz beyond
depression. Somewhere there are nooses swaying frayed and
blooming flowers between the filaments.

Feral birds swinging censers wrecking balls of haze and dust
Under your skin is a map of patience itching to get out
Cottages scintillating August, screen doors melting, burning gusts
embers blaze
And the planet spins
And the clouds are sometimes pink

2. That night in Oakdale, when I felt melted and flaccid in
winter frustration, where were your wigs and masks? In the
black dress of jazz, stone grace moving free in false flurries.
The notes were placid, orderly. Never a step out of line.
When they ask where you want to go you just tell them
something you found in a dream. From the dreams we will
pull together the edges of what we desire.

Magma winter wallowing in sunlight frost on my windshield
Ponds flowing in Mobius strips
Gardens of gloom becoming dust frothing mad with jealousy
Enter dissolving pools of sickly sweet nostalgia
Drifting apart, plates dividing mitosis landscapes into gem face
frontiers
And every ocean's edge crumbles to dirt and lost jewels

PART II

3. Where sterility grips the limbs, there is a serenity. In the silence of making time for nothing but joy. In the solace of waking up to the idea of maybe. Possibility becoming the foundation of forward movement. When you say these words that I cannot understand, know that one day I will have an answer for you. In the sweetness of my nature, limber trees and goldenrod in summer, lavender thoughts of circular returning, little by little the opening of glories by the roadside.

Zoetrope spinning reflecting gravity backwards through a wormhole
in your pupil
Irrefutable jest poking holes in your reasoning
Glints slitting razor boredom from alternate realities where you are
nothing more than floating
Becoming dust born again into dust
Dripping into amber rays of every afternoon I ever longed for
And the diamond window is still there waiting for a watcher

4. In basements I collect power from obscurity. Back then it was a mad grab for something beyond words. But there exists no such thing. Time crawls on crutches with wheels, a machine separated from thought. In your arms it's so far away, seemingly motionless. But still it rolls without a care. Like an empty gurney looking for a lover.

Gates drooping rope bridge despair knots collecting like skulls
Coyote cleaning the kill to the bones, humming drone of moon
smiling on prey
Broken when you feel like a peak, you are not always this weak
And the shimmering of leaves in July still calls your name in its
sleep

5. From abstractions I bleed dreams into reality. Glowing deep into infinite pits where I paint the walls with love. At the zenith I look at the empty blue and whisper in bell chimes. Hollow tones with clarity. In the passing of the Sun, there will be colors you cannot describe to me.

Bending like gutters up into space

*IN SHRILL WHINING OF CICADAS,
EVERYTHING IS MELTING AWAY*

In shrill whining of cicadas, everything is melting away
Sprouts of everjoy nestled between furtive footfalls,
Summer watching in tunnels and tributaries for a friend

Diminutive hills, rolling tumbles of belonging,
Folding dreamery love songs
Holding spats of rain within the future of spillways and candy shops
Pink blooming, dusting sticks without inconvenience,
Carefully selected in this seasonal dance
Only the purest joy remains

Paddies stretching miles, patchwork woven into fabric of memory
Sensory pleading remembering places meant for adventure

Forests made of light and glimmer between the foundation
The Sun is dopamine
We are the cravings

Fragile cupped hands lifting time into dead places
Making rain charms in spring with leftover postcards
Foxtail spinning by the roadside,
Under the bridge by the phone booth
When July speaks your name there are fireworks
Inside of the moon
Making a call on the corner

Waterfalls carrying golden forever ago's into the reservoir
Stockpiling the only moments that matter

In the frame of the sliding door, where time is cut short,
Do not toss tears into the setting horizon

Where there is loss there is also a will to move beyond it
But there is also so much more than that

In this breeze that does not fade, there is joy abundantly

PART III // *ANCIENT SEASON RETURN*

FUJI-SAN

Midnight swirling ginkgo leaves fanning microgrooves into
basement corners
Under streetlamps with white sheen stripes colliding fences and
nameplates
Lateral motion astral precision morphing Orion into more than
matter
Remembering the liquid freshness,
Heat of the oven opening,
Nights of knowing

Moth wings falling petals sakura in spring
The trees are not green yet
Still hillsides of mud branching up from the yawning earth
Waiting to churn with greener pastures than you properly recall

1. Brooks bleeding edges into babbling nonsense. Morals
quenched in resolve to chase ideas. Beauty before
banishment. Born again before bruises. Black and blue and
washing away in clouds of red to pink to white.

Ornate inscriptions stairway to summit sessions with the breeze
My compass points to this place without moving
Dragging listless spirits into one accord like a machine without
direction
Treads of tunnel vision, trundling over the fields of golden life above
the top parking lot
I will never forget the face of momentary significance

2. Sizzling sticks making scars in the air where we used to exist.
Sparkling something in the eye, never realized. Hydraulic
actualization lifting across eons of futuristic dysmorphia,
infinite loop of no tomorrow bridged and forgotten.

Combustion seeping smoke into smaller pasts
Those people you turn around and see and do not say hello
There are moments of alone that stay there
Even after you have left the building

PART III

3. Collecting filaments of love to weave into a better understanding. Jumbled meanings and comic strip panels made into a collage of comical collision. Of course you can ask anything of me, just don't be surprised when I refuse.

Dawn scrolling neon death on windowsills
Waiting for the collapse of my eyelids
Still watchful and wondering where the dreaming has gone

Pulling on my sheets like a child
Scrambling up to my side
And clinging
Searing
Screaming
"I have always waited for you
In the clearing behind the house
In the mouth of the trees
In the lungs of the street,
Where headstones convert our smoke into
Color
In the smallest step you take each day,
Climbing your spine like Fuji-san,
Lifting the beams into your arms,
Resting my simmering head on your blackening shoulder,
I have been waiting for you."

We are always too busy waiting to know what to do next

*TO THOSE DRINKING THE SAD POETRY LIKE A
LUKEWARM LEMONADE*

When the Sun is a star in my palm,
Where are your eyes transfixed on my fingers?

(Between the hour of sleep and month of standing still, years of slumber on rafts of old frozen wood. Collapsed power pylons ushering in your ancestors from lands of semiconscious listening. Exodus of pain, leaving for a promised land where they cannot reach us any longer. A place in the lungs where there is no weight, no sullen clinging flower.)

When the sky is a fresh shade of paint on this cosmic home,
Why are you in a black veil and gown?

(The fitful child inside is missing the point of the waiting. He cannot remember the dips and rises over ridges in frigid forests. He cannot picture the alcoves and deer trails, he cannot fathom much beyond the uselessness of an I Love You. Frisking himself for a sorrow that he has already robbed himself of. Only steady noise remains.)

When my eyes are closed and soaking in comfort,
Why don't you recline here with me for a while?

(Searching the ashes for keepsakes next to the new apartment complex. On the third floor your key will open the door to room 324, but you will not turn the lock. Glued to that spyglass into broken hearts, your reality is a shade of depression waiting for an AED. You refuse to remove the metal around your chest.)

When I am still and consuming the passion I seek,
Where is your patience?

PART III

(Blinking grace of a lightning bug in the tall grass behind the house. Soft figure of a morning dove on a wire. Purity of a sky without any clouds. Shimmering of leaves on the poplars in the throes of a summer evening. Woodpecker perched along a pylon like a torii gate. Pulling desire into a single strand and weaving without a pattern.)

When there is no reason to be sad,
Why do you ignore the joy?

AFTERIMAGE (IN MULTIPLE MEDIUMS)

White circle line-less stamped on blue construction paper in the east. Nature's stakes yawning fists opening glories on the flaking hillsides. Birds stippled on crosshatching, watching without eyes, aerial ghosts fates sewing the red string into our hem.

Onyx coffin geometric skeleton slumbers in frost. Wisps making love overhead between the moon and its children. Blacklight parade splayed open centerfold style across empty lots.

??????????????

Spreadsheets tiling windows into tourist lives, fleeting spirits only so stubborn. Leaving without a trace, light on the door closing in the afternoon. My prints undisturbed on the knob.

??????????????

Opals dangling wrought and righteous over pitch walkways from exhibits to spiral steeples. Prismatic lingering licking my cheek against the stubble, chilling abrasion saving face in light of failures swerved and surpassed.

Sizzling cone of golden hours humming on the round table. Tomb of satisfaction, the paint remembers the sound of my laughter. My mind could use a fresh coat. Cerulean curtains opened into the wrath of god, fading light making shadows like Hiroshima, the laughs are sealed in soot.

????????????????????????????????

Petal sunrise lowering death in spades, bending the palm trees in foreign languages. Valleys and crests burn in orange acrylic. Jupiter singing stormy hymns over long dead colonies, metal crags left in graveyard orbits beyond geostationary love. Moon slipping a smile into the pool, always in good time, land of silver drinkers.

????????????????????????????????

PART III

Dividing line, people scattered like sudoku numbers, it doesn't add up. Canvas misted with sleep, no one can wake up. Creases and folds origami bookmarking fault lines and warps in the plate. Behind the figure on the right, crouching lioness, hidden hesitance.

Stairs chipped and decaying. Every window covered, no peeking. Peering over the past tracking Sun paths erasing faces without knowing why. Mannequins putting on a show, new beginnings with the same endings.

On each still finger reaching for pillows in the sky, green envy waits to bloom. Fates fading off into migratory routes, leaving strings attached. White stillness soaring, overblown and overused, waiting for you to realize.

It is all for you.

PART III

Portraits splintering speeches meetings
Without concrete meanings
Lunch about nothing in particular
Movies I never saw, never knew the names of

Smiling thinking about that young child who told me
“Thank you, have a nice night!”

Another piece floats just under the skin

@@@@@@

Walking up the path to the forest line
Where everything shining is forgotten
This feels like death

The driver’s side is a portal to silence
Purgatory in transit

This feels
Like death

~~~~~  
In the coliseums of passion you construct  
I am burning the chariots  
And carving the keystones

If you ask I will tell you I enjoy the chaos  
If you ask I will tell you I am entropy  
I will tell you I do not know what comes next  
Simply some words I heard  
In the scarlet clouds like lamps  
Pressing coals into the cold dead places

+++++

Behind the tree, fragile and shy  
Peering figure wondering why  
Moonlight child forming a dream  
Shaping landscapes that gleam  
And scream  
“Goodnight”

*INTERDICTION (REPLACING REALITY LIKE A FUSE)*

Woolly blanket wrapping my head in the clouds, there is a revolving  
door of everyone leaving  
But I am turning the crank as my eyes grow scales,  
Watching justice embalm the words and phrases sticking to my  
tongue

Fragile cotton candy idealism playing with my existence in the  
bubble of hypothetical futures  
Mirror rooms expanding into space where the mountains never stop  
striking the sky looking for golden linings  
On the other side of that woolly blanket

I want to become too much, and maybe I already am  
Bleeding through the towel around the gash, listening for sirens  
Clinging to the salt rocks off the coast of goodbye

Red flares singing sparks around town, I am fleeting like the  
smallest one you see  
Black gloves over my hands, taking out the trash, swaying without  
the words to make it seem reasonable  
Nothing I say has any meaning and the meaning of that is a dry  
joke at a funeral  
And the retort you can hear is the ghost playing with the glass  
case  
Like a spinning top or a windmill

Shedding sleeves and layers, corona peeling off clementine joy adding  
some zest in this moment of grotesque zen  
Waiting for sakura to fall and rot and bloom again above every  
statue taking the subway and crawling the bars on the weekend  
Sitting tongue-tied wrapped held by a thread of politeness stale  
and crumbling with disillusionment  
A trick of the light spinning a flitting between the petals rosy and  
collapsing on the bridge  
Where all I ever wanted was the completeness of your being

But there is always more landscape to the place inside your bones,  
seeping through the fault lines

*PART III*

(Yesterday there was no reason in the wind and today there is no  
love in the sunlight, only hollow tones like bell chimes twisting  
in a furnace)  
((Tomorrow there will be hands clasped indecisive and jittery with  
a strange fever))  
(((As the Sun ripens beyond the woolly blanket waiting for a  
confidant, the woodpeckers will return outside my window like  
a dream)))  
((((And the next day perhaps I will read my emails and eat my  
lunch by the window))))



NEED

Need is an acid partnership  
Dissolving burdens into two-man shackles  
Melting joy into a vat slowly spinning, wafting the aroma of decline  
Over our noses  
Tepid half-life taking our tears and flowers and making a forest of  
colorful weeds

Skylines glimmering in evening sleep  
Spindown of shutters and terminal fixtures

In the lecture of the Sun where photon rail guns impale  
And continue

Where the black covers fold and pile up  
Waiting for more attention

Need dissolving itself into want  
Into a slurry of maybes  
And half-lidded tomorrows

Horizons that keep climbing up your face  
Long awaited spring rain sliding down the driver side window  
For a moment your eyes are black holes

Steps angled in circles paradoxical and flat  
Serrated into space waiting for the dinosaur killer  
Splitting wires under the stove  
Burning and crisping the meaning of connection  
The draw of affection misleading intentions just a lick and a  
penchant for transparency when all of my skin is a glass of  
joyful brooding you take in

All I need is the idea

A TUNNEL

Turquoise mirrors and panes of glass  
Spinning in pylons on islands of shrines  
Palm prophets bending and drooping  
Heaving the Sun across the sky

I. The hillsides of brush and scrub fields are freezing over. The memory of summer scratching at my car window. Reflections of the shade under the poplars in the backyard. Where the Sun cannot reach the snow. The sky is a minefield between the uprights. I am a stake in the floodplains, a lantern flickering in the marsh. A cricket singing lazily into the night.

II. Energy slipping between the barriers. My force is a chasm you stare deep into. A wave of bioluminescence, fertile microbes of patience. Waiting for evolution to save them. The seam of my face is grinning. The air is stirring with the beating of metal wings. C130 touch-and-go's at night. Reality bending around the hourglass into a shape like an alternate universe. I like to weave the ideas together into a fabric of joy, but it is dripping off into our dimension.

Look at your feet, the water is smiling up at you

III. When the woodpeckers greet my ears in the morning, my mind is full of grubs. When the wind whips my midnight window I am still searching for the words that will not come to me.

IV. I miss something about this connection but I keep breaking up.

*COOKIES LEFT IN THE JAR*

The heart opening slowly letting the shade inside the caldera  
Flash freezing all the joy into a razorwire sculpture  
The golden pillars of light sweeping over like lookouts  
Searchlights waiting for childhood friends to return from the store

Extremities bleeding with weight  
Blood lead lined and magnetized to my bed  
Swirling jumbling agitated minutes hours days in my head  
Nothing but the memory of tendrils flourished green, flashing red  
Bending gravity into a Mobius strip of fate  
Returning

What do you want me to say? I will say it.  
What do you want me to think? I will think it.  
What do you want me to do? I will do it.  
What do you want me to love? I will cherish all but its name.

Wooded mornings melting into tropical panes flitting like  
Butterflies with stained glass wings  
A needle for a proboscis, taking a sample of my sugary sweet blood  
Nectar for those who crave release from the bondage  
Of depressing obligation and responsibility

What do you want me to feel? There are no cookies left in the jar.  
And I am crying.

WINDING DOWN (IN THE CITY OF)

Cascade billowing flowing helter skelter drowning shelter drywall  
huts in the city of butterfly catchers  
Endless sequence of feverish loops birthing forlorn hopes of hands  
and elbows bent around the right parts  
Dangling laughter on the end of a rod, stick and carrot trick  
scratching the itch spreading like medicine over the floor  
Sickly sticky with purple tablespoons convex over your face gas  
masking the noxious anxiety but it is always outside  
Overextended into mirage islands where teal skies tear the clouds  
to micron nothings, cotton brambles above

1. in the net of her presence waiting at the top of the spiral stairs.

Delays roundabout malevolence from signature sources coursing  
slowly bloodstream sipping on swollen bags  
Layers of angelic sighs carving names into petrified waiting,  
debating the benefits of making it past lunchtime  
Collapse in the wolverine mindset, crystalline jet black textures  
walling off the bowls of astringent meat you hate  
Neon polygons warping and folding tetrahedron style across the  
dance floor without any steady pulse

2. walking to my car flipping private messages like tarot cards.

Apologies bubbling into vapor never existed just thoughts from  
windows closed off and shadowed  
Frenetic decline from solar throne to ocean bones, oily sunken at  
the bottom of the reason I stay tied to the docks  
Flowing waves sky bound laced with passing out in class, surpassing  
the logical step for the absurd

3. jaywalking double yellow lines for a little peace of mind.

Intended for everything to end before the Sun came down again,  
the bend in the trees smiling fresh eyes into my business  
Corporate crawling on all fours begging merchandise and time  
clinking cups against my patience for ridiculous bullshit

4. the vivid memories of brick buildings with second story windows.

*ANCIENT SEASON RETURN*

Sleep retreat from sadness world staring back but dreams are  
catalysts for sugary surrender and sulking

5. before you go, can you tell me how you really feel?

WITH THE SUN ALREADY SET

Growing roots over miles sipping on lead lined pipes  
Drainage shallow and hidden under the asphalt  
The wood floor is a buffer between my thoughts and the mantle of  
chance  
Convection bubbling jetstream exterior searing like the Sun pulling  
away all the clouds

===

1. In the powder blue forest at the chime, the sky breaking into  
crumbling pieces, panels of glass refracting all the ultrawhite  
smiles. Where the logs are green and wet with fear, space is  
filled with birdsong. Magenta dripping leaves, nature  
decanter planting vivid dreams into the soil. Two chickadees  
dashing between the blooming fingers, watching you wonder,  
where are your eyes, when did the sky come back together?

===

Cerulean light expanding into this space, gaseous experimentalism  
calm in quotations  
Making faces when I type, poet's foil peeling when unripe and  
ready to collapse  
Vaporous satellites hovering when I exhale in the northeast  
Waiting for the snap freeze

Sediment brushing aluminum cans on the roadside  
Careless and unforgiving image in the distended reflection of a face  
A placid mask of love in the eye of every beholder  
Burning at the stake waiting for a flight out of home

===

2. In a tulip yellow room, melding furniture with piles of  
passion. The windows are too bright and the idea of sleeping  
on the couch passes over the water. Still life of flowers only  
halfway opened, they cannot find the Sun. The lake on the  
wall divides Exodus with the shadows of mountains making a  
shelter. A blue grave with bells and whistles covered in  
acrylic and wishing.

===

Motors passing by my window, anti-solitary confinement  
Mood padded with flocks of balloons in July, climbing higher,  
    dropping like dead birds on the shore  
Tangled in hydrogen wires twisting between high rises overlooking  
    the waterfront  
Spying on the people living a part of my past

Seagulls over parking lots making homes in the strangest of places  
Embracing the sky that is always the same dull force of momentum  
Controlling the peace in my nest with a keyboard and mouse  
A cat stalking sentinel cutting glares when I imagine

===

3. In her cardinal red dream, mannequin leaning on a telephone pole. Haze of old nostalgia left out in the cold crawling up watchtower control. Searchlight buzzing humming tunes of rare loving, looking manic in the face of vacancy. Too much space left empty, gathering the warmth of the loneliest sun, burning split ends going wild like severed power lines. Mannequin blind and waltzing over the pool in the road.

===

Idealism crafting arks over the unchosen, open ended people falling  
    out of themselves  
Sound carrying the bits and pieces of myself up the stairs and into  
    the recliner  
Her eyes reminding me of nothing important, the new paradigm  
Where patience is sunlight in a statue garden, forgotten people are  
    no longer crying





CLOWN COLLEGE ADMISSION ESSAY

Leaning fortress slipping foundation down the hillside weeping  
hiding linings in gray clouds above nothing undone but the  
confidence to wear a sundress in this wind without a need for  
stakes and ties, ropes and bindings, rain fly resting in the tangles  
of blooming branches, never coming down, not now, not now.

Crawling between cracks in the cotton, crows turning the air with  
their calls, molten mating misery like molting a malformed  
adolescence, lessening the weight of need rolling away in lily pad  
armadas, flimsy carriages carrying your love where I can see them  
sinking in the daylight, your tenacity is a mayfly under my  
curtain of deluge.

Cruel blue, placid view skies vaporize the clouds with sudden rain  
in golden hue no rainbow, drastic powder over trees, nothing left  
to please, line of the forest deteriorating into chirps and warbles,  
fickle talons and feet splitting the path in the windy quad with  
the sculpture of momentum, of entropy birthing form, through  
the portal of charcoal remains layered graphite refrains he sat  
with a guitar in my memory for only a few moments, earnest in  
wonder, a lover of nothing but the present.

Shrooms crowning the fleshy wood, waiting for petrification, stale  
being of stagnation feeling out every angle never stepping through  
the corner of the glass, overflow contained meticulous blaming  
nothing but chance and the change you despise, I stare at the  
ceiling with it by my side, bed partners with chaos, drilling holes  
in the notions you keep steady in plastic cages, dog-eared pages of  
traditional erratic displeasure, hateful gavels for arms, slamming  
alarms before sunrise, hermetic pulpits freezing zero Kelvin sealed  
away in place.

Picking through the trash for bits of insanity  
Like a homeless man in Utopia

*SLEEPING GOD*

She who holds stars in between her fingers  
Shifting reflections of light in black hole horizons  
The back is the front and the front is inside  
And the pillows are soft and the people are quiet

She who spins idle running humming waiting for herself  
Pulling the strings out of your ears  
Playing vibration games with your heart

She who bends the halls leaning on cosmic crutches  
Muted screaming in the glimmering windows at the mall  
Remembering the cracks in the wall  
Slipping under dripping pines and willows

She who colors the Sun in different lengths  
Making the great crescendo soar with chromal elegance  
Dancing in jittery euphoria as the waters split

She who sleeps into the late morning  
And the late evening  
And the late night  
Without waking and shedding her power

LIKE TAFFY

Dragging melted timepieces in

torrents of ditch water flowing  
endlessly in front of my tires.

Stretching the filaments of  
thought sizzling holes in the

time it takes for my frontal lobe  
to blink. Kneading the bruised  
portions of imagination where

the colors came out all wrong.  
Folding the ends of patience over  
themselves into a swan floating  
down the galaxy. Waiting on the  
moment to arrive, to wake up

like a bird before the Sun, a  
driver at the wheel on too many

medications. Pulling at the silver  
threads of my window, fruits  
in every shade of not yet ripe,

plastic effigies of a dream  
wishing upon one listener.

Sleeping on the past, gazing wide  
eyed out the window when the  
colors are more than the usual  
pale blue and gray. Slowing the

crawl of time into a slurry of  
starry hopes, straw in my mouth,  
my lungs are waiting for the fill.

*UP IN THE CLOUDS ABOVE VESTAL*

Living on perforated park benches swinging in chains  
Rattling softly into the microphone  
Waiting on hibernating nostalgia to unearth a useless pleasure  
Like having sex with an ex

Behind the house the trees grew eyes  
After the towers and saws cleared away  
Between the weighty power lines  
Watching us drive away and return  
Every time it rains the mist clouds them like a cataract  
Falling over the cliff of green boughs

Shooting stars hidden in the sails of ships  
That used to float the Susquehanna  
Bleeding into the ocean of trash,  
Plastic sharks snatching fresh meat  
Industry plants mailing me their ads  
For a service I will never remember the name of  
Or have a use for

Mud in the mix, all over my boots,  
The laces are fraying and showing the elastic

When I get up tomorrow morning  
I'll find the red blooms in my lungs  
Split from the branches of the tree across the road  
Covering my car and my mailbox  
Waiting for a package that may never arrive  
Covered in red blooming moss  
Crawling targets beneath eyes in the trees

////////////////////

Love is a magazine in your basket by the toilet,  
Maybe I just don't get why you need to read something  
While you're in there

*ANCIENT SEASON RETURN*

\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\

Outside is a storm of gold and green living breathing down the neck of soulless pleasure, leisure like free spinal taps covered in blankets and klaxons, patching up the holes at the base of the world, blooming in colors you don't care to see.

|||||

In the park on top of Vestal, 10:30 crimson lights peering over the  
playground equipment  
The boys are playing tag in the dark  
And I am sitting on the side listening  
And the bugs are waking up  
And the stars are bleary eyes from space  
And the weeds are still in the night  
And the valley is glowing  
And the moon is rolling  
And the sound of laughter is a wall of force against doubt

Where the responsibility of obligation ends and the joy of  
nothingness begins is where I sleep in sheets of vacuous intake

Endlessly drinking this strange waiting pleasure

PART III

PORTRAIT OF BRAIN SLICE IN SPRING

Dusty hallways in a high rise  
I am waiting in glass  
Golden hours spilling sunlight slanted  
Through storm drains in the walls

Rain is the scent of a memory  
Melting snow shedding kerosene  
In a hot seat, umbra licking me clean  
Dripping along the seams in cherry

Do you remember the feeling of being  
Home?

-

Breathing steady in a merry breeze  
Sleeves in tapestry tapes on repeat  
Flowing floor-bound through sheets  
Canals locking sinking filling for free

Crystal ships departed waiting for shore  
The edge of the earth under the lamp  
Beneath blood diamond watchtowers  
Fuming spiral ballad flowers in bed

Do you remember the thrill of chasing  
Phantoms?

-

Ghosts of power, placebo in dusk  
Headstone humming regrets of the month  
Transient lovers and careful collapse  
I'll be back in the summer with petals

Now (*ENOUGH*)

Low noise of the furnace buzzing pipes  
The static shifting clicking of the house  
Settling  
With the memory of Metheny playing games  
With the shadow of music in my brain

Frantic obligation swirling in a tornado  
Piling up outside the walls of my compassion  
Sectioned off and purified

Only enough for the objects spreading light across clouds  
Dispersing joy in seeds of rain  
Washing away seasons of pain

1. floating in a hover state like a comatose stone. Zen licking between my ears with shoreline waves brushing against rough patches. Grazes with being many people at once, now just an empty bed with one heat signature.
2. drifting along a river in a fever dream. I enjoy the wave as it is, nothing more or less than a force of phantasmal remembering. Every word you snuck past my mind is still stuck in my ears, I can't shake it out.
3. doing a dance in the dark room, your face is sky blue watching clouds dissipate into pink smog rolling along your temples. Breathing down your back, the moves are shameless and your placid demeanor is a sign of acceptance. Dreaming larger than you have any right to. And you will receive all that you desire before sunset the next day.
4. somewhere in the future is a bridge out of the dream and into a steady reality. Happiness is a sunny day driving along the side of the mountain. Pleasure is the smile on the passenger's face. Respite is the noise of people walking to a different destination than they did yesterday. Peace is a thread of being, softly vibrating, a single pitch.

More snow may fall in the end of April  
Than rain over the dry seasons of mind  
But there is still a joy in the absence of words  
Where a landscape is fresh for the find

*WHEN IT FEELS LIKE EVERYTHING IS FADING TO DUST  
AND CHEMICALS IN YOUR MOUTH...*

Why does it have to stop and start again like a shock to the heart?

- I. Where the corners are glued together into a mural of landscapes, there is a shadowy cave I have not yet scoured. In the rusty chest at the end of the tunnel is a faded patch that someone left. The last memory of their being. The quilted cloak receives another addition and I move on to another landmark.
  
- II. Searching worlds for a joy that does not cremate itself upon exposure to the arid breeze of time. Dust only piles so high before it topples. My fingers are gray stained feelers, morbid examples of the color leaving you behind. In the sky over the horizon the blue and white race beyond your vision. Clouds roll in over the lighthouse and a faint drizzle begins to melt you away. In that moment of swimming through yourself, it can feel like the subtle gold of an afternoon was never enough to satisfy you. Sometimes it's hard to discover new joys when they keep crumbling like this.
  
- III. In the blue haze room where magenta drips from the ceiling and golden motes float between shafts of parallel lights. Heavy particles colliding in heat, jumbled and scrambled, slamming brain matter against itself, bending minds along the beveled edges of a picture frame. In the center is an idea that became a figure in your childhood. You cannot throw it away. Wherever you go, the waiting follows.

Crawling along the hillside  
The stars are riding on airplanes made of chemicals  
And the night is dead and quiet

Somewhere in the furrowed land  
Greater winds are blowing you in the right direction



*ANCIENT SEASON RETURN*

It isn't always easy to feel connected  
In one piece  
But you are always reaching for every scrap of yourself  
You are always searching for the right place  
And in that search is a glowing joy on your fingertips  
Blessing the shadowed grounds, brushes with light and stardust

In that world where stars are faintly leaving you behind,  
There is always more joy than time

*THE STRANGE NEGATIVES OF STILETTO, NY*

In the blood of new winter skies, I peek through the cerulean curtains to find another frozen scape below. Lightsick and pale, I return to the orange glow of bedside enlightenment, resplendent and frothing with urges for sleep. Alarmed and nostalgic, waiting for peace, I rise and head downstairs. Into the sterility, into the modernity, into the mundane science of mornings. In the cup of coffee next to me is a fly drowning violently. I don't even drink coffee. Beneath the placemat is a map of this place, marked in frenetic scrapings and gibberish. Outside is a car waiting for me. There is no driver. At the circle we turn around and around and never really go anywhere. The buildings are stout with smokestacks, belching nuanced chemicals into the brisk air, chilling and comforting. The churches are stained glass with pews in the windows, half-shattered, half-melted, belonging to the happiness of the people, they smile every time they pass one.

Over the Susquehanna, there is an ocean, a pond that ends in sight but continues in mind. On the coast is a Bauhaus prison of Art Deco demise. The floors are an M. C. Escher wet dream. The windows don't really exist. The mirrors are doors into new parts of the facility. Through chromatic glass is a vista like Revelation.

Water and green plains and nothing else not even the mindless people that keep it glued together. On the other side of the pond is a school where the dorms look out over a beautiful topiary garden. A Roman statue in the courtyard. Signposts pointing to eternity. Work to be done without any manager. Sometimes when I visit it reminds me of Auschwitz. Off the highways are lots steadily emptying, but never abandoned. Markets filled with thieves and black powder. Outside my father rests against the car with a hole in his heart. No heartbeat. Smiling as his DNA is taken in by the asphalt like a tar pit. Across the traffic lights is a megacomplex of desires. Atriums and theaters of tubes and food courts and floating disks taking people to heaven. Please don't go. Take me to lunch there, make small talk, I'll take anything they offer me. In the frantic yellows and frustrated reds and frivolous blues of the plastic cheapness I will swallow my pride and buy the entire place a round of shots. I don't even drink shots. I don't even drink. I don't even know these people. The rivers are industrial waste ponds. The factories are shattered husks of what we never could have achieved. The carousels are playing lo-fi funeral dirges. The parks are wailing with crushed

dreams and wood chip splinters. In the reflections of Taco Bell windows at 11:00 PM in the rain, I have seen this place before. In the dreams where powder coats trees that do not exist, I wish they may never have existed. In the evening the skies are orange hellscapes with graphite stratified between sunrays. Porches are frozen purgatories. Anterooms you cannot escape from. The mud sticks to everything. The rust chips and the tendrils stain your teeth. There is a colossus in the center of every city like this. There is an ancient mind keeping the children up at night. The satellite dishes on the hillside have wilted. The red crosses that peek between the boughs by the on ramp are blazing when you aren't looking. In complexes like space stations I orbit hazardous materials, like the smile you keep showing. The glances you throw my way like a circus animal. I'd take scorn and peanuts over the hope of another failure like that. In the frozen breath of power plants over the horizon of arcades and diners, I remember birthdays and dates with frostbite. Losing an ear, a finger, a life. Crystal canals polluted and laughed at by environmentalists. Piano stars plinking away on felt strings and rubber keys, heinous whispers I left like atom bombs without detonation, they don't know how to dismantle them, neither do I. How can you just erase words like I LOVE YOU? How can you just eliminate yourself from the equation? You Cannot. In the deserts of Main Street there are cyber parlors where I blew away in the wind. Bottomless pits trapping cars and lovers, different ideas of platonic death, but I've resurrected worse. Here in this city I am a wizard without a hat. Driver-less and without motivation, chasing newer dreams than have ever existed. Strange negatives scattered on my floor, memories corrupted or otherwise modified. Flooded. Drenched in some digitized elixir. Waterboarded under the rainbows we used to admire on the way home from school. Cat-like armatures of steel carrying cables of light to each and every mill and butcher in the valley. Looking out over the twinkle is like staring at insignificance and finding yourself hopelessly in love. Sometimes when I think of your face it gives me the same phantom emotions. Further than the water stretches is a shed where we had a party. All the people I never knew were there, and when they left you said we had sex. I don't even drink sex. Wait how do you say that again? In underground grottos of misfortune I tossed away coins in a mad dash for collective joy. And it worked for a while. But every carpet is meant to be pulled out. Loneliness only wins if you let it, and every bird is screeching its war cry. Beady eyes scanning for signs of life, just

PART III

be a zombie and you'll be fine. A cog in a machine, a savage, undead machine. Humming with the sounds of the stars over this amorphous wasteland. Downtown is a frenzy, a flooded pain of loss, reconstituted as the worship of progress. And I love to bend the knee, oh I do, I do. In the lofts above museums, curators plan my downfall, shards of gratitude vaporized in their eyes. Former lovers of the inept. As the Sun comes down over ember fields, lightning bugs bring the summer to a standstill. In between the floods and the blizzards, before the end of nature, before the end of me, I stand staring at the setting of peace for the final time.

Before winter comes to steal everything away. In the corona of Sol is an angel waving sweet nothings in my general direction. I try not to think about it too much. Back in the metallurgic den of malignant minerals, my mind is a metaphor, a pocket dimension of dreams I paint onto reality like a square to a cube. Expanding into dust of nothing, sleep restless in its chase for my head, I watch it like the Panopticon, I am behind the bars. In the orange glow of this lamp, I swear my innocence. In the gray bleeding of the moon on my pillow, I question it all. Loneliness is a keystroke away from festering. Here in this city there is a forest

where mushrooms grow on dead trees. I don't even drink mushrooms. Wait. There is a creek beside the mycelium pooling underneath rocks, shallow and drawing all good things into one accord. In the summer you can hear the wind whisper over it. Don't cry. It's only gone for now. I'm only gone for now, when you wake up I will be here with you in this strange negative on the floor. Your face is pixelated and sharp. Mine is empty and without eyes. But the smile is still there if you imagine it. If.

Beneath this layer of fatigue is a sleep waiting to take hold. Roots gripping eyelids. Waking worlds are only good if they exist. This city never existed. But you, the one in it, you always did.





APPENDIX A // *BEFORE BABYLON*





BEFORE BABYLON

*MOVEMENTS FOR PEOPLE LIKE MYSELF*

The clouds across the sky  
The Sun and the moon in an eternal dance  
The stars rotate around poles  
Your eyes burned like those stars

The willow outside my window,  
A windy March night  
The street signs bending  
Beneath the breeze  
Your hair would have looked amazing

Me in the morning, getting out of bed  
One foot forward,  
Then the next  
Down the steps  
Your fingers intertwined with mine

My hands across the paper,  
The pen tracing up and down  
You move across my mind like a spirit

The corners of your mouth when you smile

APPENDIX A

*BLACKBIRDS*

Blackbirds flying overhead  
But to them, the orange clouds,  
Like some ominous smog,  
Are the creatures flying overhead

The blue sky like a canvas for the day,  
Always getting dimmer, darker, dark,  
Mistier and gray and plain  
But overall, it was a surprisingly good day

Now it is night, now we can count stars  
Together  
Count the stars like flying things in  
The orange nebulae

Watch as the structure falls apart  
Like a power pylon collapsing,  
Buckling and folding and crashing  
And beautifully marring the earth

It takes precision and chaos and  
A masterful lack of any influence,  
You simply let the world flow through you  
And it will  
It will  
I promise

Sometimes you just  
Need to look past it all  
Look up  
And watch the blackbirds as they soar overhead  
In front of orange sunset clouds  
And a blue canvas sky

You need  
To  
Believe  
In  
Something

BEFORE BABYLON

*OF PYRAMIDS AND CITIES*

Glass pyramids rise up but the snow  
Weighs them down  
The sidewalks are coming apart at the  
Seams  
It seems  
And so I took the long way around  
In my blind journey to find a place  
I had already known



So a girl sat down next to me at the  
Left handed seat and said nothing  
I returned the silence and after a while  
She got up and moved ahead one row  
And sat next to someone else  
Like an apparition, like she never even  
Existed



Then another girl sat down at the  
Left handed seat  
But this time she asked if it was taken  
And I said "No, you're fine."  
And she took the seat and we didn't  
Speak after that until the lecture started  
We turned to each other  
And debated how large the universe  
Really was  
We pondered over our place in the  
Universe  
And in the end the lecture ended and  
She left  
So did I

## APPENDIX A



And in this wide universe of stars and  
Planets, of webs of light from every  
Angle, of glass pyramids and snowy  
Cities coming apart at the seams  
It seems  
Getting back to my car was the hardest  
Part of it all

## BEFORE BABYLON

### *(HOW TO) TAKE HOLD OF THE SUN*

Perhaps I have once again become directionless  
Perhaps this is another set of still frames  
Of a man walking in a circle for all of eternity  
Perhaps I am simply taking the long journey  
To find what I live for, who I long for  
To find out what it will take to have no trouble  
Getting up in the morning

Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps,  
There is a revival coming for me after all  
After years of waiting,  
After years of making every conceivable mistake,  
Perhaps this is when I can make it right

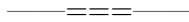
Patience like this thins my blood  
It makes me weary with waiting  
I am not a virtuous man by any means  
And it hurts to listen to nothing but my  
Own incompetence at times

But someday, before this snow freezes over again,  
There will be grass  
There will need to be someone to mow that grass  
There will be a dreamy landscape at  
7:00 in the afternoon  
In the middle of August and I will be there  
With a drink in one hand and my other hand  
Reaching for the Sun through searing spears of light

There will be a need for me in this world yet  
And You should be there to see it when the time comes

*ACROSS THIS VALLEY (FIRES OF FANCY)*

Across this valley, we run through shadows and laugh at every raindrop that blinds us. Across this great dip in the earth, we look down from hilltops and through chain link fences at the bright points that we tie together into our existence. This is how we live. This is how we thrive. This is not mere survival, I need to keep reminding myself of that, this is something far greater, something deeper and wider, grander than any canyon can muster. Across this divot that lies in the shadow of misfortune, we light fires of fancy. Across this misty muse, we disperse the falsehoods and make the truth ours. This is how we make life happen. This is how we make joy a reality. Not through structure, but by bringing foundations to their knees. This is how we turn away the sadness, the sickness of annihilation that grips our throats. This what it means to feel at home. This is one of the many things I've been searching for. Across this valley, I can find it now, between every strip mall, atop every gravel pit, through every back road.



Across this sunken plateau, a part of this life has fallen into just the right place, the puzzle is forming once again, and it is such a beautiful sight.

*BLUE TONES PT. II (FLOWING, ROOTED)*

...

As I'm flying down 201 in the backseat,  
I can smell nature's musk of roadside flowers,  
And the evening Sun reminds me of  
This point in time that keeps me rooted  
Like a tent stake through the past

Orange glaze of a dying era streaming through  
Bay windows, bookended by colorful  
Posters and a sticky kind of nostalgia,  
The kind that hasn't fully formed yet,  
It's still too hot out of the oven

Looking out, lines of highways intersected by  
Metal leviathans of power pylons,  
Crystal clarity over commuters,  
Dust kicked up from departures,  
I had to wipe my eyes, sometimes I still do  
But the tears are gone

And now I was there in that moment in time,  
Flowing down 201 toward Vestal,  
Smelling the roses without stopping first

I cheated the system, and for once,  
I got away with it

Coming back, the Parkway was strangely quiet  
And I turned up the music in my headphones,  
And as this soft jazz began coming through,  
I realized that the floral scent was mixing  
With a bit of car exhaust and cigarette smoke  
And I almost wanted to laugh out loud

Almost

## APPENDIX A

Because eventually I learned to laugh at  
This universe  
I learned to laugh along with it,  
And it has allowed me to float free, if only  
Seemingly,  
As I wrap around these tent stakes  
Inside of myself,  
Like a bit of seaweed clinging to a child's  
Foot as they wade in the ocean

This river I float in is nice  
I have learned to love the soak  
The blue becomes a beautiful thing when you can  
Mold it into brighter tones



*LOVE FROM A DREAM HAS NO FACE...*

Tabula Rasa

I. Futures build themselves as I stand below the canopy. Leaves of unknown regrets, blocking the Sun. Lizards flick their gaze upon me like watchers removed from consequence. The fall is all mine, they simply don't know how to cast the blame. So they watch, and that in itself is enough to carry the same message. I slip into the quick switch of their sideways eyes and I'm lost in what seems to be a fever dream.

(She sits across from me and reads from the menu as I watch the blood orange sunset behind us. Her hair is an indeterminate length, but enough to shield her eyes from me. It could be anyone. My idea of who takes up that spot changes as quickly as the shifting gazes of lizards. Our food comes. I don't eat. It's not really there. And neither am I. I'm somewhere else, far off, leaping from treetop to treetop. Living in cedar hearts and splitting like ancient willows.)

II. In the uncomfortable red fabric seats of the auditorium, the podium presents a woman who seems out of breath, about to collapse. I empathize in a strange, vicarious way. The curtains open and close and the music is nice, but my mind is thrown a few rows north, sitting atop a head of dirty blonde hair. She shakes her head and I am discarded again.

(Into the trash, cozy plastic prisons. Padded rooms in between polymers and pedantic excuses. My mind is a scapegoat factory. A pity party parlor, tricks up every sleeve, behind the back, in your ears, you can always hear me whispering and mumbling to myself as everything comes into and out of question.)

## APPENDIX A

III. I traded spaces in my heart so much that I gave myself whiplash.  
No roads lead to answers. And that's okay.

(Not everything has to be a big deal.)

Blank faces and magic markers,  
I sculpt from the twisted depths of a  
Tenacious heart,  
And she is the most haunting of all

*SUMMER SLIPPAGE (GOOD HUNTING)*

Summer scarlet slipping off,  
Through fingers rough  
With snakeskin changes and  
Tired minds powering every touch

Pastel purple skies go black and stars  
Bereft of life blink and flicker  
Waiting for moths to come and take them

More trees are going this year  
More limbs into the earth  
More flooding at the stump

@@@@@@@@@@

Sunset scars covering flesh and I  
Remember fields and valleys when  
I felt the end of myself approaching  
Summers gone by without  
Whispers to carry on the memories

Just silent reminders in the view  
From the hilltop

@@@@@@

Somewhere there is a place where  
Summers go to die  
But for now they simply leave us  
And I can already feel this one  
Slipping

@@@@

Bloody clouds like cotton ball wounds  
Score the sky above black patio chairs  
And I am where a part of me belongs

Not all of me  
But a part

## APPENDIX A

@

Find me at the edge of this place  
I'll be waiting for you there

Good hunting

*...AND FINALLY THE ASHES TAKE SHAPE*

I have ashy layers of words that comprise this bulwark of an emotionless demeanor. Frighteningly nonchalant and equally devoid of real meaning, but that's a separate layer of irony and other non sequiturs. Onion man, thin skin over sandy dunes billowing through clouds and doubt and a tent flapping in the rain as I try to set it up.

Lightning rod spine,  
Jolted awake and now I'm  
Sleeping again  
Like a man engraving his own epitaph onto sheets of granite balanced on his head.

A mess of words a slurry of confessions mixed into concrete swirling and curing in the Sun over sidewalks in need of patching. Gangly humans in posh clothing waltz over me as if they cannot spare the time to listen and when they do they do not hear.

Ashes clear the throat like a smoker in the morning glaze over fire escapes in the red heart of the city. Wispy dreams caught alight by demands and obligations and the drums of a beating motivation. I would sit and stare at the crumbling end of the cigarette and wonder why it has to end in such a way.

Scoop up the leftovers and make something of it all  
Create a staircase up to those golden clouds  
And light your hair on fire  
Like you have a cause to burn for.

## APPENDIX A

Park parties ramble and roar and roast themselves to a nice golden  
brown before I go home and collapse and cave in on every idea  
that floated by my head during that time. Thoughts of

Death

And

Love

And

Responsibility

And

Hatred

And

Experimentalism

And

Shifting.

What do these words mean to you?

Where do the ashes end and the beauty begin?

I say it is all something quite extraordinary

To look at

Through and through.

*ABSTRACT AND IMPOSSIBLE*

The air is melting  
And my skin is flypaper  
And windows are howling  
And the sky is naked and apathetic  
And the moon spins upside down  
As every coil decompresses or snaps

I am winding my arms into ivy strands  
And picturing every young willow that  
I never was

I am forcing open eyes into every corner  
And biting eager tongues as the Sun  
Stares down at me like a leviathan's eye

Small dreams, floral patterns as canvases  
Warp and tumble and coalesce into  
A planet wearing these mixed forest hillsides  
Like a verdant viridian rouge

But my face is flush with the envy for a  
Landscape I shall never call home

For the small feelings I feel I have no right  
To grow within me

For the slow escapes I yearn for  
That I cannot create with these lackadaisical fingers  
That I cannot will into being with the flourish  
That I may desire

For every abstract and impossible dream  
That I just miss  
By  
Miles  
And  
Miles

;

## APPENDIX A

A small sigh escapes my lips as I lean back in my chair  
The night air is slightly cooler than the ninety degree murk  
That we wallowed in all day  
The street below is quiet besides a couple of women  
Walking a dog by the stone steps below  
There is a rustling in the tree above and I think that  
The birds have come back to the nest

I look back over the coffee table to my left,  
Through the archway into the dining room  
And my mother is sitting there  
Talking to my sister and father

I wonder how this kind of living is even possible  
How this scent of life wandered into our noses

;

Olfactory outages and memory leaks  
Ice cream truck vengeance and shiny walkways  
Towering trash lifts  
Tiny doubts like cracks in air  
Crawling in from edges nonexistent

;

I look down in front of the chair and see the cat  
Staring back up at me  
Lounging in a way that only I could find admirable

I reach down and scratch under her chin  
Then let her relax for a while  
As I do the same

Beyond the mesh of the loft, the stars  
Began to peel out from behind  
Curtains of light pollution

I ache for an existence like this one

;



## BEFORE BABYLON

Idyllic intravenous idiocy,  
Little crumbs in corners as I smile  
But they tumble downward

Ghostly green jealousy that killed me  
Years ago  
And I could just  
T A S T E  
The future I had envisioned  
And every bud on my tongue cried out with  
“CRUMBLE GRACIOUS HEAVY LOSSES,  
THIS IS THE FAILURE YOU CAN PROPHECY”

;

So I got up and went upstairs as I  
Tried piecing this puzzle back together again  
But every glance up out of the skylight  
Gave me the same look back

“You are already living in this  
Abstract and impossible dream”

*LEAVING IT BEHIND YOU*

Just beneath the swinging pendulum Sun  
Is where I shall sit

The willow will wrap me like a downtown wall  
In ivy contours

And as I become a living topiary,  
I shall look back on the acrylic moments

Parallax photos like holographic windows  
And ghosts the shade of my envy  
For a life I chose to abstain from

Chameleon cuts in my iris, iridescent iotas of  
Regret  
Of  
A  
Strange  
Yet  
Familiar  
Taste  
Upon  
My  
Tongue  
As  
It  
Rolls  
From  
The  
Duct  
To  
The  
Lips  
In  
A  
Stream  
That  
Seems  
Unending

## BEFORE BABYLON

Until it stops and I wonder why I was ever  
So sad in the first place



Greener pastures  
Receding through portholes  
Beyond my existence

(Take)  
(Me)  
(There)

*IT FEELS NICE (I-IV)*

I am the end of the IV  
 Dripping slowly like saline from  
 Anesthesia tear ducts in a cave of haze  
 Within pupils too dilated to focus

- I. I breathe in and the universe breathes out to give me more room. Silence peaks and spills and washes through the smallest crevices inside me. It feels nice, sometimes. It feels nice. To slowly dip and rise like a bobbing buoy, existing in a separate place, it seems. It feels nice.
- II. This is the moment you were waiting for. This is the time, this is the perfect instance for you to let it flow out of you. Just open your mouth, I know you can. I'm listening. I'm imagining these words rolling through the forests upon my skin. I'm imagining these ideas crawling through my hair as I dream. I'm imagining these feelings coursing through arterial raceways. It feels nice, sometimes. But only sometimes.
- III. Stand upon edges too tall. Balance like a flower in a shattered vase. Steady yourself against these pillars I have tried driving into the ground. They reach up into golden rays like a radar signal sent back to Heaven. Break the little things, they only matter to other people. Drain away the vileness. Draw the pain from yourself and store it in a place further than the universe. It feels nice.
- IV. Breathe out and let it all escape you. Your teeth have become these shaky fingers grasping at ideas like a child's toy. Do not hold on to these things. Let it all drift and drip away. Slow changes, turning of tables, pulling sheets over long dead desires. Cry if you want to. It feels nice. Sometimes.

Punctured  
 And pretentious  
 With pretense

This is no longer a sonderous nihilism,  
 For that will fall away into death of all kinds

## BEFORE BABYLON

This is a ritual of motions  
Bellows expanding and contracting  
Modal changes over minute discrepancies

And it finally feels nice again

*SURREALIST PETAL FANTASY*

Stranded filaments coalescing around my head  
Like ancient tree light rites

Jellyfish tendrils, half moon horizon,  
Lunar midway terminator staring back at me  
Like I am the gem to be polished

But I don't know where to start  
I cannot see all the faces of myself

1. through garnet glints in corners undiscovered, you can see me.  
just a smile and conversation away from a BP Gulf accident.  
rusty floodgates help nobody.
2. restless in Skylark diner, lavender stratus skies steal my  
attention. do things steal yours as well? i miss that market.
3. suppose this all amounts to nothing. suppose words are white  
noise to be whittled away into shapes of meaning. i don't think  
she ever cut deep enough to see that kind of blood.

You forget the feeling after a while  
How it feels to turn the gem and watch  
From a different face

To care for a different cross section of the world  
Every time you need to realign the edges  
Of your reason to exist

4. cells replace themselves every so often. phasing out the old and  
growing the new. innocent brutality in the forgotten faces of  
people you once couldn't look away from.
5. lowercase compassion without a real target, misjudged intentions.  
intonations like drama masks under a microscope. i only wanted  
to start little riots of joy.

I am not the anarchist here

6. anonymous alienation, swept under rugs under noses like  
reacharounds. unknowing undoing, silent and nauseating like a  
world inversion. i didn't realize how long I was holding your  
world upside down until you did the same to mine.

## BEFORE BABYLON

From rafters I imagine hanging gardens  
And I long to become a vine,  
Inverted and innocent as I witness the creation  
Of worlds more familiar than this  
Surrealist petal fantasy

*No FOUNDATION*

Frozen in ice of essential stagnation,  
 Moss and algae growing in alveoli,  
 The silver discs dull and I haven't seen  
 O'Hara's coin in quite some time

——===——

1. Leonine magistrate presiding over locked up bones of a dead man. That man is a snakeskin, and you reading this, you are the magistrate. Know that when I burn the memory of writing this out of my mind, I am burning you.
2. Jackal lines running trails around wet lawns in a flood of many kinds. Standing water going green and foamy, wood chips charting courses through weeds, what has this place come to what have I come to what has this art form become for me and what am I doing enslaving myself to the words I should be manipulating like an artist's brush.
3. ??;?
4. Between the bouts of nihilism and manic jubilation, a strange man meets me in the mirror. Sometimes I blink and a new magistrate is chosen, new offerings to burn light it up and comfort this freezing little boy in the dark woods of his own creation.
5. The things that can go wrong, they are quite extensive.
6. Golden scepter gavel, the authority speaks and I put my face to the floor like a dog. Sometimes you cannot escape the vices you have built upon your own truths. Love, lust, affection, appreciation, apprehension, all the same tepid potluck stew seeping through the veins.
7. Know that this titanic force is not you working within me. You cannot hope to change it. You cannot snap off a branch and say you have felled the tree entire. You are not the one in control. There are no rules, simply limitations without reason.



## BEFORE BABYLON

8. Jumble the lines see what happens love me when you hate me  
and toss me aside when you need me speak softly to me when you  
bite my words off like a bug decapitating its lover. I am reaching  
up for your ankle I am reaching out for your neck I am reaching  
down for your ideas I am reaching into the darkness to try and  
blaze a path never devised before I am reaching into the center of  
some strange sordid place where abstractions go to die and I am  
pulling out the tears of Pollock, the weeping howls of an art  
embodied not in the content but in the way it is created. Art  
imbued with the flavors of the creative process.
  
9. Poetry to me is a snowball rolled down an incredibly small hill.  
You must make the most of what resources you have at any  
instance in time. The ball does not necessarily have to contain  
just snow.
  
10. Clouds in the mane, violet coin eyes like the flipping Sun whose  
tail I seem to see eternally. You look so tired unhappy, let me  
show you something that made me smile today. I'll take a small  
reminder of who I am to you, please, just put it on my tab.

———===———

Coughing up the swallowed remains of  
A man I used to be,  
His ideologies still send resonant notes  
Through my nervous system  
But I have once again become a new metaphor  
For the same hunger that O'Hara died with

*STILL THE HIGHWAYS GLEAM UNDER  
SUNS UNDESERVING*

Fish tailing from the bushes, my eyes hide behind these transparent lenses like

plexiglass protectors but we all know what blows to the head can do for a bit of peace. At the bottom of this sea, all is peaceful as a lobotomy.

Depressurized like a stroke victim's face, sometimes the legs are an autonomous nation beneath the bickering wealthy percentage of ribs. If you got the chance, what would you say to me to change my mind? Lanced with

longing, hanging crucified from trees already horizontal with time. Skies

become doors and grass becomes pretty wallpaper that browns and peels and purifies what it can before it blinks out in the winter gales. Sweeping blunders dragging cinder blocks on chains like the pets we didn't want take the .22 and do what you have to it's a time we all should experience. Love is putting down the things that may as well already be dead. You are the

end product of that event chain. You are the one. You are the one that makes the clouds emote so in the fall and winter. You are the one that floods the playground with only a small tsunami. You are the one that

muddies every line and strips every meaning to be used as your own. You are

the one. And still the highways gleam under suns undeserving, because of what you are. You are the one that hijacks my conversations with myself. But you never quite have anything of substance to tell me. You are the substance. Tight lipped you fall like a propeller over and over until it

takes you somewhere. I'll be the lift. Let me be the lift. I'm optimistic about this one. Let me gleam like the highways under you. Freakazoid I am, belonging is the future, coming out of every corner at once, collective

mind collects my end and deposits the check in due time. Jumble me up and toss me like the dice, let me win you. All I am is a fast fading photon from that undeserving sun, flowing back in time to find the light that defines me, cut the cord, I'm my own might. Let me be the lift beneath

everything, fish tailing behind bushes as I prop up the dead and the dumb and the discarded.

*MY FUNNY VALENTINE*

Faces of coins quantum entangled together,  
Aces in sleeves wrapping my throat  
Tighter with time but I am slipping between,  
With a grin and a gleam of the teeth,  
You better believe that I'm living in every moment at once

1. time melts before being snap frozen into shards that I suck on like ice cubes. memories that I stored in order to keep from going bad. some moments are too good to pass by just once.  
(Just a Quick Hug and Everything Fits Into Place)
2. this is such a sensual series of thriving places being categorized and marked down, every data point in its place, every angle and vector of every gaze calculated and accounted for. corners of streams crossing before me and I leap between like a crimson cardinal looking for a lover.  
(Senses Survive Beneath Layers of Loss)
3. horizons revealing rainbows that I've seen before. how much time has passed, why has the rain stuck around for so long? take me back to those torrential days of waltzing between every drop on the way to the car. I am still dripping in too many ways.  
(Foolish Hearts Don't Always Belong to Foolish People)
4. it's funny how far away that night in February feels. the lapse in temporal reasoning feels so good to me right now. I am beyond the flow of time, and in that way, all my wounds are bleeding from closed holes. plasma percolates from perforated pores, I am a romantic no more, simply a man.  
(Can You See Me Up Here From So Far Away?)

*SOMEWHERE THERE IS A SWEETNESS*

My ears are bleeding and I'm smiling  
More than ever before

- I. Somewhere there is a sweetness talked about like vinyl records, pinned up to the wall waiting for me to ask it every question I have been saving up. Rainy days never felt so familiar.
- II. Completeness laughs at my bones and I cannot stop laughing with it. Because they are always in a state of being filled like so many cavities in my teeth.
- III. This age is already passing too quickly. Days are rolling by like F-13 sonic boom barriers, cusps of realignment. Little reminders that time is such a long thing that can slip away when we open our hands.

---

In the middle of the night,  
I am swallowed by thoughts of you

Like dreams descending from golden clouds come to  
Relieve me of my flesh

I hate such a slow malevolence

---

- IV. Coming apart like a shipwreck, my head tumbled beneath my boot, I only want to gain something all my own. Many people come into view only to turn back over the horizon moments later.
- V. Steady the clouds cover the trees in gritty silence. There is no rain, only the remains of a shower. Wet metal beneath my back, remnants of obligation, lessons in obfuscation.

## BEFORE BABYLON

I resist definition at all times

I wish to be understood, yet I cannot concede control

I refuse to kowtow to any context

And I wonder why I slip by every set of eyes

In plain sight

By being exactly what they aren't looking for

*ON DOVES*

Beside ourselves in waist height worry, above our heads is a tree of copper leaves falling like icicles. Shade being drawn all over your face, why is your smile cast so darkly? Can you not shine for me just a little bit? Hypocrite that I am, always stumbling under the same towering cliffs, shying from such a searing eye above, vampiric in my isolation. Fangs of every negativity eternally sinking themselves deeper as ships into flesh and blood oceans. Serrated edges you are sawing me in two, naked and vulnerable cadaver, the anatomy of a change in motion. I never stop spinning those wheels of mine, I don't know why I say you don't love me. I just know it to be true. Some boats are lonelier than islands of dune after dune, we wish for capsizes too soon, fixated on a blue moon chance that shall never return to us. If I call you a dove, it does not mean you carry olive branches. But I still wish to run through that plumage, snowy and laden with travel. Why do you preen yourself if not for such a time as this? Lowly updrafts around crumbling factory sarcophagi drive you to black holes in my eyes, captured from so far away. Ride with me to the afterlife in that little boat.

I miss that kind of triumph terribly.

BEFORE BABYLON

*BOLD FIRE // DROOPING FIRE*

SEETHING BLAZES PERCHED ATOP TOWERS OF GREEN  
ENVY LIKE A NECKLACE OF EMERALDS

ITS STARES HAVE BARED THE TREES IN SHAME, THEIR  
BRITTLE SWAYS REACHING UP LIKE DEPENDENT  
CHILDREN TO A CLOUDY CEILING THAT CANNOT  
FATHOM THEIR LANGUAGE

FROM CHIPPING WALKWAYS I CLIMB THE EYES OF THE  
FLAMES, MY SHADOW PLAYING GAMES WITH THE  
SNOWDRIFTS

TAUNTING ME TO PLAY A GAME OF CHANCE, A DEATH  
RACE, ITS SILENCE IS A LAUGHTER I CANNOT FORGET

BUT WHAT IT CANNOT SEE ARE ALL THE LITTLE  
CLEARINGS I HAVE SHELTERED MYSELF IN

EVERY SHADY STEP IS A FUTURE WORTH CHASING,  
ANOTHER MOMENT OF THE GAME GONE BY IN MY  
FAVOR

THIS AGE IS PROVING TO BE A BOLD FIRE OF ITS OWN

//

on the other end of time is a place where the leaves are just now  
beginning to turn, just now showing off to the thinning clouds  
how a rainbow can manifest in my hands

trees love to weep with a drooping fire in this place, a fragility  
from a distance, an inferno looking to return to Hell

the on and off, the bipolar nature of this feeling I have been  
gripping so tightly, what could it be?

why clutch the unknown so close to your chest?

why not let it droop and melt and slip away like so much ice from  
the backside of a car, or so many little deaths from a blazing tree?

## APPENDIX A

why do I feel such envy for this image of longing, like a crown of  
cracked rubies left out in the snow?

crashing down, I am dancing in the cracks, every fault line and  
impurity is a view out of that great tower of wind that feeds my  
fires

red light of beginning and ending, endlessly push me on, beyond  
these flames and rubies



*MAKE IT LAST*

Bending like spaghetti  
Snapping steel cables on carriers  
Clear the deck  
Or lose your legs

---

As I bag groceries for strangers I find a certain lightness of being.  
In that moment, nothing matters to me except the safety of those  
bananas and dinner rolls. Surely if I were to drop an egg or a  
bagel I would cease to exist entirely. For what else is my purpose?

---

Brushing aside fearful confirmation  
Biases of birth  
Belonging in arms of cosmic flux  
Changing and shifting like  
Fluid under tumultuous moonlight

Do you look up at this same storm  
As it reflects the Sun back into your eyes?

---

I haven't really grown much at all since I left high school. I still  
believe that those people I see as friends will remain in this place  
of understanding. And perhaps they design their own futures in  
such a way, but just as circumstance guides my feet, it guides  
theirs. Abstract directions that don't always seem to exist within  
our frames of consciousness.

I miss the sultry summers where the wind  
Would blow them my way.

---

## APPENDIX A

It's just talk  
Mouth foaming with filler  
Filtered out all the reality  
Without considering the innate art

---

Between you and me, there is a secret beginning in my existence, like a shadow on reality that I cannot see over my shoulder. The shadows of spindly trees tickle it as I wander, telling me that there is a reason for this flood of a strange feeling.

Staring out of windows at such a velocity, there is death waiting at the end of the line for your head. Stare softly with me, now. Make it last.





APPENDIX B // *WORDS NEVER SPOKEN*



BEFORE BABYLON

*I ONLY LOVE YOU WHEN THERE ISN'T  
A CLOUD IN SIGHT.*

Getting rooted by the feet  
At Cutler Botanical Garden  
Remembering friends buttoned up to their egos  
But the height was such a gentle thing then

I haven't felt high like that myself since...  
Since...

I don't know if I have.

Getting lifted by the eyes at the peak  
Of Japanese hillsides  
In summer

There you wait at the base of the switchbacks for my arm of flowers  
and other vines, hang from me like a walking jungle canopy.

I want to flower there with you without a cloud in sight to cast its  
judgement.  
Here in this vacuum,  
I love you tenderly and idealistically.

Getting shifted and shuffled aboard ocean vessels  
Just off the Atlantic coast  
There in the haze of neon static I can see the piers  
Hurling from orderly little outposts of concrete and sand

Somewhere my bones are stuck in that soup, black and shining like  
a treasure waiting to be found.

Here in a mind without clouds, your hands grasp the calcium like  
a trophy.

I sparkle with a smile you cannot see.

Golden beneath the black  
At the back  
Of the China cabinet

*I ONLY LOVE YOU WHEN I WANT TO FEEL EMPTY.*

Staring at ceilings bending with pressure of snow against steel against seams bursting with vigor of too many lives. This cat does not know me as it rubs its face on my arm. It shall never encompass who I am.

I am leaving this shell here for you like a breadcrumb husk, empty like the memory of you from so many months ago. What feels like years scraping me clean. Scoring lines in the bones, tally marks. I want you to explore the cave paintings inside of my former deaths, those marks made without thinking. Or perhaps after thinking much too hard about it.

Strict spaces without room to laugh, but we laugh anyway. In distant countries I am known by many other names and none of them my own. Those names are accruing power beyond a simple recognition, they are gaining traction like a mini movement. You may know it as fantasy but I have tasted the respite it deposits in my mind.

After the high of existing, there is this thought of blackness. Of non-conscious nothing, a true lack of ourselves. And in that reality, I wish to find myself again, like you once did. Blind and deaf in a strange land of afterlife, bumping into my statues until the garden is clearer in my mind than in my hands.

Grazing my skin on sources of warmth. Knowing that there is no draw beside me, just the curiosity of a cat trusting a stranger with the soft fur of her belly. Ceilings may collapse in on us any moment, but this is a purity not many can muster. And far less can understand.



*VEIN MELTER PT. II*

Crystal clear canals of medicine, detriments of chemical evidence, washing me until I am invisible. Inconceivable. Perhaps once an ill-conceived idea but the flesh around my fingers grew into constrictors. Squeezing all that I was into a cup and I took the shot. I made the leaps and bounds and became a bridge to too many foreign lands, strange people, limited places in the limitless dreams I aspired to.

Pocket dimensions of dusk.

Red miles of sunsets that just  
don't  
end.

Slamming of smoking guns into horizons without answers from  
those who take too long to think of a response.  
I'm mean and I still haven't been given any hint as to why,  
Just a storm rolling over the weedy hillside, puncturing hulls like  
crag, she seems to be capsizing without a touch.  
Natural dissolution.

Preoccupation and precocious people driving wedges into a trench  
already wider than galactic distance, how do you do that? Tell  
me the secret I want to drive a wedge between myself and the  
person she thinks is worthy of attention.

Incandescent noise circling the drum without dropping, no spikes,  
no surroundings, just the air and ocean of a noise I once made,  
blasted into the infinite and obscure ocean of worldwide linkages  
and liabilities.

When I reflect on the ripples of the digital age, my feet are like  
pier stilts without reflection.

Vampiric consequence, I want to suck the prettiest neck I see.  
Please invite me in.

Let me ease the pain, let me melt those veins away into nothing  
more than transitory matter.

You deserve more than this sick bubble of life ready to burst like  
a seed pod without offspring.

## APPENDIX B

There is this bit of dust tangled in dirt floating and flapping by my air vent next to my feet. Like some hanging or crucifixion. What has the dust done, other than once be a man or woman with ideas?

Even after I am gone, perhaps my name will be dragged through the mud.

Ultraviolet charades are playing out as I wait against small walls and booths, dangling swinging lights like metronomes or pocket watches, hypnotize me. Surprise me. Comply with my will, it's such a small thing, such a feeble dream, a hope beyond the will to give up. I want to live to see the day that the Sun rises in the shape of that dream. Whole and rewarding. Completing. Finishing.

Red garnets glittering under my feet, too far below to help me divine a path forward. I cannot foresee a refraction of light through those vessels, or against the mirrors I keep in my pockets, her gaze of lasers is laser focused on the current decay of a life she cannot control, but is not always entirely her own.

I  
Won't  
Do  
That  
Anymore

He says.

There  
Are  
Many  
Ways  
To  
Say  
Goodbye

And I have not found all of them yet. Like puzzle pieces, they are the shadows of hello's and the sisters of I love you's. Lost terracotta armies waiting to strike when all you want is a little extrapolation.

## BEFORE BABYLON

Sometimes my work is hard to interpret and I sincerely hope that you never find a good answer for it. Because when you do you'll forget about me.

On parkways where lights never stop burning your flesh,  
Let the cold wind remind you of the time I spent holding  
    someone's hand.  
Perhaps too much time.  
Though it was not wasted.

I sometimes want to shed these feelings like clothing but they always grow back. Layers of chitinous refusal. Refuse. All of it. Extended metaphors for hyperextending your reason to live, to give away every beautiful thought you collect in return for a simple glance out of proportion, or the touch of a future that does not exist.

Clouds  
Dark

If she is your energy, then you are her experiment.  
She is harvesting you like the Sun, she is a Dyson Sphere you cannot understand.  
Gravity favors her in all she does, and you stumble whenever you leave the bed.

Wailing bombs drop from stratosphere bunkers, isolines are barriers of entry, nothing past the peaks of Everest or they will gun you down.

Dropping through amber evenings without a care in the world, but the snow has sucked all the color like a sponge and done away with it. Sometimes I feel like the snow is trying to kill me with a lack of memory. A penchant for forgetting. Where did I make those holes in the snow when we played in your grandparents' backyard? What good is that snow now? It drips down my back in patterns of disgust. At much too much to contemplate properly in one sitting.

But I sit.

## APPENDIX B

The Sun came down a long time ago now, and it has left me here  
with you and I cannot fathom why.  
I'm sure you have much the same problem.

Brushes with denial are commonplace here in the valley without  
wind. No wind, except when it attempts to maul your face  
with snow of razor wire.

Brushes with hopelessness, it makes me feel like a monument  
desecrated by my own expectations.

And perhaps that is exactly what has happened.

I  
Love  
To  
Bite  
Off  
More  
Than  
I  
Can  
Chew

I said that once before, were you listening?

Here is something that I once heard:

Dynamic emotions are a commotion like turmoil like trains  
running off of tracks, words that feel like going back often lead  
you forward to a cyclical respite of learning. Returning to an old  
love is sometimes a simple joy within itself. On dusty shelves of  
the past there is an overgrown plant like a willow in a microcosm  
of why I love you. You there, reading this. This has gone from a  
past bit of advice to a current regurgitation of cliché malice  
aimed at the moon that evades my praises.

And now it is a prophecy of how she will return to me.

BEFORE BABYLON

*POLARIZER // POLARIZED*

The snow stalls out over our heads  
Waiting for some invisible blood to drop  
So it can soak it all back

The ending is a climax that is never reached  
Just sliding toward a blazing red exit sign  
But you shall learn the lesson before you leave

Nonsensical misfortune made up on the spot  
Nodes of regret populating whirlwinds  
That only you could create in your angst

A shortness of breath is the same as a  
Blockage of reasonable words to say  
Nothing comes to mind

So I stop and I stare at the Sun too long

*EQUINOX IN SMOKY ROOMS*

Equinox in smoky rooms, buried in jazzhead tombs,  
 Talking politics to people I knew nothing about, slamming fingers  
     on keys like the hinges of an ivory door,  
 Their faces are changelings in unsettling suburban households,  
 Antimatter angels of abstraction, little dragons on podiums  
     pouring smoke down my throat, no flames  
 Nothing to fear here, no, not here

That smoke is frozen in pockets covering my car  
 Frosted glass cracked headlights yearning for an ice pick  
 Debilitating, waiting for the next turning of the wheel  
 Waiting for the next churning of reality  
 Warping a weave like magic, what this matchstick is made of,  
 Trapdoors with diamond strike plates  
 Sparking all the way down along the river

Equinox in smoky rooms, this is just a solstice at the peak, but the  
     skyscrapers are passing ahead of us  
 They are playing in the clouds like a pillow fight  
 I wished for that once  
 And the star spat upon my clenched fist with a flurry of snow

Kill the contrails in the troposphere, we don't want them here,  
     they are distracting you from my fireworks  
 Watch yourself around my Roman candles, they like the taste of  
     blood  
 They want to center your eyes on the chromatic orb in my palm,  
     an oracle's tool, a shackling mood, a dragging burden of  
     baggage that I want to devour

Let me eat you into a new person  
 Like carving away the char on a statue

Equinox in smoky rooms, I was the last one left  
 I was the last one who cared about the swans singing their songs  
 I was the last one who they wanted  
 I was their final quarry  
 And they shot me dead on the spot

What a lovely tune

*DESTROYER // DESTROYED*

Blue sky sparrows like sly devil arrows,  
Melting into trees like dryad bones,  
Roots without thirst

Grafting myself into lights without a mind for necessity  
Belligerent apathy becoming the end of me  
AB ambient arms of steel thimbles  
Soaking in the hum of the earth and the space between

So many limbs snapped off under the weight  
I remember when I had to hack off the phantom boughs  
Like amputee dreams, leaves brown and gone  
Sucked of purpose beyond simply  
Existing there in front of me

Handsaw teeth gnashing  
Micro fracture fronds crashing into needles  
Strewn about without a pattern to conform to

Nature collapsing below deck rasping for no breath  
Lasting only a moment  
For only a memory  
Let me recreate the scene  
Like a garden of botany  
Vines and conversations wrapping politely without boundary

Destroyers of jealousy  
Heinous remembers me  
What do they replace it with?

Layers of eyes all of them hers destroying me steadily nowhere to  
hurt but the heart of the issue just a husk of misuse abusing the  
nose. Aloof and obtuse. Shattered like panes in perpendicular  
vices. Intersect now, then left to devices.

Plummets  
From  
Heaven's  
High  
Rises

## APPENDIX B

### *A STUDY IN LANDSCAPE*

#### I. BONFIRE CLEARING

At the mouth of the trees, overgrown weeds crushing rocks circling  
buried ashes, alien white branches grasping the dirt.  
Uprooted, the evergreen leaning, praying for gravity's mercy like a  
rainbow. One path blocked, another opened.  
Cold breeze whispering winter's dying wishes, snow gasping for  
breath under shady ridges and boughs.  
Plastic convenience overturned, overtaken with grime and growth.  
Sun peeking through needles, severed wall of nature showing rivers  
of blue streaming.

#### II. FRACTURE SITE

History repeating, bleeding on warped records. Fresh death, tilted  
and torn to pieces. A wooden corpse burying itself with no  
witnesses.  
Beneath the roots, tunnels and holes, pockets of mystery like  
treasure without sparkle.  
Motors humming in dust symphonies along the road to the  
northeast. Leaves making trails of wind in liftoff.  
Left to rot.

#### III. PAINTED STONE

Tucked low in hushed movements, brushing away the brown  
needles, leftovers from a bad dream.  
Turquoise revelations, reminders of cracks in the sky.  
I don't know how often the Sun reaches that spot.

#### IV. CREEKSIDE FEASTING GROUNDS

Fur scattered, dragged along the edge of the water. Something ate  
well here.  
White tufts, illogical smattering organic death matter. No signs of  
a struggle.  
In the silence of the wind, water warbling like morning song birds,  
drifting, aimless.  
Squirrels hopping fallen trees, hollow and sunken in shale and moss.



## BEFORE BABYLON

### V. CHOCONUT

Foaming and flowing over pockets of ice, biting the ground mad  
with winter frenzy. Chilled and caressed with golden wind, sat  
on a dead deciduous.

Through the window of trees to the north, buses backing into  
depots. Feverish time crawling for feverish people.

Crystalline, pooling and swaying between rocks and pebbles,  
carrying everything away.

Flirting with fungus and the hawks above the dam.

Serenity.

### VI. RIDGE LINE

Up the steepness, switchbacks blazed in manufactured razing.  
Shaven hillside, stretching north to south for eternity, lines across  
the sky stealing energy from the grass, making a halo around  
the Earth.

Prickly watchers grasping childish necessity waiting for piggyback  
rides on my skin. Crawling.

Airplanes taking off from Binghamton Regional, Doppler decline,  
aluminum spine snapping, catching a breath.

Lanes of tracks where wheels once were.

### VII. GATEWAY

Massive armature bends upward carrying power above our heads.  
Splitting the trail, a torii gate begging for worshippers.

In the clearness of the sky is a looming drooping of clouds into a  
hazy shrine.

Glass dripping lanterns swinging, listing in slight breeze. Late at  
night with the spirits walking the center path.

Spiritual homeostasis.

### VIII. ALCOVES

Shale foundations poking holes in the dirt, showering pockets of  
shade and affection on the needy.

Snow finding purchase in havens of winter's melting. Ferns peering  
over the side, stunted trees housing nests of seasons passing  
by in an hourglass.

Empty, paper peeling off in the frost, waiting for time to sever the  
connection.

## APPENDIX B

### IX. RAZE LINE

Covering brambles with green needle neglect. Chopping and  
hacking and sawing and smashing and cracking and slashing.  
Branches missing, replaced with bright eyes along the trunks.  
Unsealable wounds released into nature.  
At the base is a frozen scape of blue and gold, waiting for a little  
more time. Just a little more time.

### X. HILLTOP PATH

Crossing the evergreen river, a path at the peak, just before the  
brownstone and fencing.  
Crows calling between the branches, flapping overhead, watching  
limbo games with natural purgatory.  
Waiting.  
Slanted and lacking an end. Asking for generous journeys for  
another day.  
Sunlight glistening in beams bouncing, bounding across leaves and  
imagined pathways.  
Bridges to everywhere.

### XI. DESCENT

Arc of glowing rocks and foliage, bending down to the dam.  
At the base is a split in the path, shattered directions.  
Left destroyed under monolithic pylons, obfuscated in brambles  
and groves thick with mystery.  
Right leaning to busted fences, spools of rusting wire collecting  
memories of fishermen and wanderers.  
No Man's Land.

### XII. CRYOSLEEP DAM

Frozen pond with filters. Circular scratches of blades and drills.  
Sheen of liquid tension under the Sun.  
Oil paintings of gills screaming for water. Somewhere under there  
they sleep and wait.  
To the north the houses are giddy with spring.

BEFORE BABYLON  
XIII. LOST DOG RIDGE

Golden plain, flooded and filled and drained away, loving the ebb  
and flow of disasters.

At the center there was a blanket with food.

Waiting for a return.

The Sun painting rocks in the distance, empty lots for lease.

Graveyards and a dead fox among the caterpillars by the floodstick.

XIV. DRAINAGE PIPE

Across the rocks and along the roadway, pulling my shirt with  
frenetic ending. Guardrails wishing us luck.

Snow sloshing endlessly through the drainage pipe under my feet.

As I near the front door there is a blooming.

Stillness in lavender prisons of my own design.

*VICTORY IN A DREAM*

Winding down coil collapse snapping jaws maw of tomorrow alarms  
going off at 6:00 AM when I just want to fade further into sleep.  
Sunlight hours so smiling and serene, I miss the powers it gave me  
in my childhood.

Frenetic possibilities all helter-skelter summoning chipper melting  
nostalgia like board games or pillow forts.

Upside down, nothing mattered. Frothing matter glaring like  
crystal magma in winter, icy children wailing on the  
playground they tore up years ago.

No more tag or kickball.

Polarized lenses licking my eyeballs, everything is green. A million  
billion stars peering beyond blue tinted atmosphere.

We used to live in a dream like Japanese alleyways. Lanterns and  
storefronts and perfection tracing the outline of the mountains.

Where rivers run through your spine there is a numbing sensation,  
taking away all that you love about pain.

I remember the names for every day I waited for that dream.

I remember the time and the place.

But it's hard to remember my face.

Only my silhouette against the skies full of fireworks.

Only the false memories of victory.

////////////////////

I am always coming of age.

BEFORE BABYLON

*TATTERED PATCHWORK IMITATION*

THREAD I. CASCADES

Meteor showers curling in the atmosphere  
Washing away the light pollution in waves of  
Shooting stars over sunburnt skylines still  
Cooling off in the darkness

In the cracks the coiling heat condenses  
And the strangest plants bloom  
Humming old altar tunes engraved in stone

Some curious nights are an arm around deep forests  
Consuming, shoveling the secrets into pits buried in mist

All my trees are made of glass, no secrets here

THREAD II. WATER FACTORY GOTHIC

Shells shattering in ocean factories  
Drying up in plastic graves  
Melting and folding into faults  
Spewing black ashy gases up to the surface

Melodies in cracking atmospheres  
Some smooth plain of accosting your ears  
Under a grater making chunks and strands of sands  
Taking your arms and legs  
Into some unknown tides

Your mind is a wave but it breaks and rolls  
Spewing foam at your feet  
Sinking

## APPENDIX B

### THREAD III. BLUE BELLS AND RAIN DOMES

The sky is a blender of radio static  
In consonant chords and rhythmic textures  
Jungle of blue bells  
Ringing in rain domes  
The glass keeping clouds at a distance  
Like kids in a pet store  
Tapping on glass  
Tapping on us  
Tapping at our heads like  
Crows on a wire  
Calling for blood

Failure is a bump in a road full of potholes

We are a group of cattails  
Swinging bending in the breeze  
Where the shadows play in the water  
Remembering days gone in an echo of  
Childish glee

### THREAD IV. BROKEN WORDS FOR A BROKEN MIND

Heavy lilies leaning heaving trunks of belongings  
Off the suspension bridge  
Into the reflection of the Sun  
Like the pupil of a black hole

Petals spinning waiting looking for mates  
In the flash frozen ocean  
A new jungle of minds colliding in salt  
And spices undiscovered

[The rest is illegible]

*SWALLOWING FOAM*

Billowing cascades rolling stretching  
    Like obtuse thoughts and reasons overlapping  
        Overhanging climbing up and down the legs of the  
pier  
                                    Rough barnacles or soft moss making  
peace, swallowing foam



In summer the leaves are gluttons  
    Eating all the light, taking in all there is in silence  
        But in winter they have not even a ghost to take  
their place  
                                    And so the snow absorbs all  
sound, all heat, all color  
Leaving nothing but a crust of ice  
    And a crest of slushy debris thrown from passing plows



“I’ve got a flight down to Virginia for the interview.”  
    “Take your mother and I somewhere out in Southern  
California.”  
        “She’ll be heading down to Mexico during  
the spring semester, you know?”  
                                    “Ben, didn’t you say you wanted  
to go on a trip to Japan at one point or another?”  
Where are these places?  
    They phase out of view, they are not here  
        Not like the places in my mind, so vivid and  
clear  
                                    They are here in my palm  
shouting welcomes home



## APPENDIX B

Beds of foam taking them out

To the reaches of their desires

So far flung and full of bright gems like other galaxies

And I am here

On the coast

Of frozen loam

Swallowing home

In a sigh

~~~~

Dark red sumac in a summoning line

It knows my name through the window of time

But all those plants are

Dead

And their image is a

Following

Drone

FASTER THAN LIGHT

Red washing over then
Orange into yellow
Drowning green blue indigo
Violet ultra
Violet

Invisible in the stars like a tick on the universe
Sucking it dry
Sucking it dry

Jumping cosmic gorges
In self-driving vehicles
Crashing into bridges of plasma
Between black holes and
Neutron stars

Everything is moving along
Passing under conveyor belt dreams
Sleepless nights
Eyes wide open
Dreaming
Light passing over
Red orange yellow green blue indigo violet
Gone

——===——

Two points across the room
Infernal white eyes between
The spaces of my fingers

The whites of your eyes
I know no such thing
Only the reverse of my own
In the mirror

APPENDIX B

All the rooms getting cold
Old walls humming without a
Ground
Everything slowing to a lightspeed crawl
Violet indigo blue green yellow orange red
Then heat
Just heat

Invisible among you

Right where we need to be
In the crackle of change
And sweeping grace of storms

Clearing it all away

Only whispers remain

JUST BE (A DREAMER)

Loping jungle dragging along behind like a smile on a string
Teeth tumbling in white marble arches
Opening up the keystone
Swallowing my tongue
No words left but the unspeakable wrapping of my limbs
Around every dream in your head

Rainy soul wandering the dead golden grass
Patchy with mud and other roadside drippings
The drains swallowing all the icy runoff
Quietly like open fields in the asphalt cracks
Potholes of barren hillsides beginning to bloom
Making preparations
Pinning up the decorations

Under the boughs fallen from another winter's load
Little mammals talking round the piles of
Pine needles
And little flakes of dreaming
Waking up slowly from the frozen birth

Someday you will remember me in this spring
Or I will remember you
Or someone will remember us together
As the Sun and the Moon making passes at loving
Because we are dead and gone and nothing but a dissipation of
 electricity back into the expanding fold of golden clouds

Don't be afraid of that nothing beyond us
Just be a dreamer and wonder at nothing
At all

A KISS FROM STILETTO

Lower lot in the middle of the woods. Quarantine ragers blasting lights and noise out into the night. Post-time sleepwalking. Four pack of something heavy swinging from my right hand. High visibility jackets swarming across the blacktop. Cracks and shouts, people still walking toward the swirl. Through the metal husks driven by blind drivers. I turn and hurry under security footage rolling. Drop the liquid weight by my front right quarter panel. Back out and away from those faces I knew from before there was an after. I've got to leave without knowing why.

On the parkway under chromatic traffic signals. Steering emergencies through intersections. Past all the closed buildings. Piano tiles swimming through the shadows. Your memory is a series of hidden switches and strings. Pulling compartments open and entering the glass room. Messy desk. Bay window. Deciduous view.

Into an empty room. Single window. Olive paint. Trim carpet. Closed door. Thin glasses on your nose. Who are you?

Like I asked.

Lean into you. Nothing soulful. Taking what I wanted. Backing away. You're gone already I am awake. I am still here curling around these dark empty lots in my dreams. Somewhere in Stiletto. I miss you in the way I miss nothing.

BEFORE BABYLON

*TO THE DEER I HIT THIS MORNING
(ON THE WAY TO WORK)*

Stood leaning roadside hazards on
Flickering candles in blue klaxon
Morning sleeping blankets cotton
Coughing early wetness waking
Making vibrations thoughts still quaking
Jell-o plastic cases baking
Shaking manic gathering threads
Dancing maypole circles in heads
Smashing together in my bed
In my bed tossing turning around
Pitch room circled by birds their sound
Resounding bouncing down along the ground
From branches beady eyes wide beaks
Through my phone speakers
Late notice coming via yellow blinkers
My legs in fault lines of integrity
Melting metal beams eventually
Crumbling bending snapping readily
And the yawn of the earth
Is in my mouth

Stop and

Sleep

Don't get up and run
With that
Broken leg

Sleep

APPENDIX B

RHYTHM FOR HER SPENT TEARDROPS

Misty moon
Midnight noon
And other tired
Metaphors

Murky rain
On my car
Stoic solid
See-through

Round in circles
Digging trenches
'Tween the streets we
Live on

Dragon breathing
On my desk
In silver capsule
Dreaming

Empty houses
Hummingbirds
Her eyes are tired
Drying

Round in circles
Photographs and
Little trinkets
Piling

And I just type

These

Little words

Away

For

Her

—

I'm trying

BEFORE BABYLON

STEM CUTTERS

Machinist dreams in the rain
Feedback looping
In puddles

Talking to ourselves
Our many selves and spirits
Slow soil wanderers
Drifting like paper boats

Packing tape tethers
Wrapping late neighbors
Maps and other rated chambers
On platforms audio only
Remember the
Melodies

Pick at your petals
And prune
And prune
And prune
In recursive descent

Live now or stall out
Your eyes losing heat
Your joy of defeat

Still growing green leaves
Without fruit
And your smile a
Stem cutter

That's cute

GLIDE LOSSLESS REMEMBERING

And the skipping light ripping shooting beams
Across clouds

And the frenzy growing maples and pines
Shallow roots moving
Nomads

And the glass corridors along hillsides
Fall asleep translucent dreams

And the old 4-track by my bookshelf
Patch cable strung to a
Miniature amp next to
My father's old
Paintings

And the ancient horoscopes in all the
Old newspapers that never came true

And all the ones that did

And
And
And

And ice ages waiting for us to thaw
From our freezer burn

And the ladder you climb to the Sun
At the top rung there is nothing
Left for you
Now
What?

And the hills like boxes of crayons
Rolling under my flight

And the past that swims and swirls
In tandem with itself
Ouroboros-like

BEFORE BABYLON

And
And
And

And the wind in my hair is just a feeling
Like love and shame and dismay

And there are many of me multiplied
And folded into this origami
Thing of words
And images
Unspeakable thought
Verbalized
Poorly
(Poetry)

And the future is a spark from that place
Where I've fallen apart in pieces
Shaped like candied hearts

And
And
And

And And
 And And
 And

And the floods washed us out back in 2006
And again in 2011

And my mouth keeps on leaking the
Thoughts I've been thinking
Been drinking
Remembering

And it makes about as much sense
As you've come to expect
Of me

EYES OF CRIMSON MOUNTAINS

Water spilling from the eaves
Onto rocks and weathered floors
Into sawdust drawers

Over my head in a dim light
Barely seen eyes closing
Less like volcanic beating hearts
More and more the cooled anger
The glassy chipped outlook
Viewfinder buried metamorphic
Time going going and and and
And
And
And
It goes on

Leaving spaces like
Sponges

Water coming down from a tear
In the sky
Opened up lines in the clouds
Like a staff of notes and keys

In this dusk mist template
Boilerplate painting by the numbers
My face is arithmetic
All angles polyhedrons
You don't know me only know my
Shape
The way my dots
Connect

The way my words
Reflect
The cyclic nothing coming out
The lack of something going in

BEFORE BABYLON

Empty night
Without bugs
Or leaves

Water dripping from the eaves

Gemstones set in my head
Statuesque
Can't move on to another
Rest
Only this marble fist
Reaching for porcelain hands

In the dark light
By the pond
Algae sleeping

Snow is coming

Tundra whisper softly drifting

Under rock ridges
Overhangs

I sit

Still ripples

Moving off like a
Meditation

Eyes like

Radio

Towers

APPENDIX B

Watching

Nothing

Move

Over

The

Water

BEFORE BABYLON

EMERGENT

Light will find its way through the cracks
Between the thin sheets
Even through the haze
Of a day like all other days
Like a month in a life as a blink
Or the darkness of seas of time
Between worlds, in transit

Where thinking follows the shape of snow
Fallen to the ground
The next morning after a blanket of gray
And the sky is crisp as gold leaf
And the ice shimmers just the same

And there is no sound but the steam
Of your breath like the foam
Of a far off ocean against your skin

All of nature like a city in exile
Against the grain of your feet
Making holes in the fresh drifts
Nothing stirs but your mind
In a field of white

And the self of a moment ago
Faces the self you call "I"
As a winter spirit sits idle strumming
Your old guitar in your head

And you guide the division
In a silent world without life
Until all the white stillness and death
Thaws

And decays sprouts a second mind
Splitting from your first
Like a twin

And you find something there
And you let it in

RIGHT WHERE WE NEED TO BE

That couch is too big for you
Like the plaid shirt you wear, it must be your father's

You are piling on layers of hiding,
I remember that dive into the shadows
I still flinch at the scrutiny of sunlight
But I use it to embellish the hope
Instead of driving it into my skull

&&&&&&&&&&&

I am appearing out of thin air
Miles away
Without leaving my chair
My fingers are glued to the keyboard
Creating things that shall never survive

This may be the high of life for me
And I shall never know it
Not until it has passed me by many many times
Not until you regret the things that I once did

&&&&&

What if this is right where we're meant to be?

You in your uncertainty,
Learning to balance waves on your fingertips,
Emotions that come and go,
While I take those same feelings and let them
Escape into space where they shall never return to me

The Earth swallows those aspirations and promises fruit come June
I am waiting for that filter to lay itself over me once again

&&&

If you are reading this without understanding it then perhaps you
should start back at the beginning

BEFORE BABYLON

In time you will find a pattern and it will turn you away from me

But you will have discovered all that I have in a single breath

&

Melt away from me

These are not busted limitations letting me wander freely

These are pools of reflection polluted by too many choices

This is right where I need to be

Becoming new again and again

Undone and remade like secondhand origami

—

Sometimes I just need a voice to make real

The dreams I cannot remember

Some days it speaks like the Sun off a glinting recollection

Finger-like intertwined in a tangle of light

"We're right where we need to be, you and me; it's alright."

In this mad search for art we can
Sometimes forget to stop and look for ourselves
In any case, these are one and the same,
But we misconstrue everything to mean whatever we see fit
Even this is just opinion and hypocrisy
But I own up and I continue the search

We write not to promote or to complete
But to explore and to reach out into
Those spaces within ourselves that we
Never imagined could exist
And in this exploration, we go on forever
There is no end to the landscape of a human soul
We are infinitely complex creatures
And those who strive to find the end of themselves
Often find it at the end of a noose
Or a gun
Or at the bottom of a bottle,
Be it filled with drink or pills

Finding yourself can be scary
It drives you mad,
Fear is like a thief in the night,
And your body is a temple filled with the
Loveliest gems

Too many people get caught up in
Finding art in the completion,
In the result
But that is foolish

Searching itself is the art
And it too is foolish, but there is also
Beauty

Frustration is endlessly looking for
A love that isn't there
But so too can there be a hidden art
That will blossom into a new love

Keep searching.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Ben Buchanan writes poems and stories, programs web applications and command line interfaces for a living, attends graduate courses, looks out of windows, listens to music, and occasionally exists in the general vicinity of Binghamton, New York.

His work can be found in his three previous volumes of poetry, *Babylon Effect* (2019), *Another Flow* (2020), and *Drift Illogical* (2021). For more poetry and other work outside of the poetic realm, visit Ben's website at <https://lexicachromatica.xyz>.

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