

Dawn Tefft

Eventually We Will All

Eventually we will all be doing what we want to be doing. Magazines and horoscopes say so.

I fear my body. The way it's crisscrossed with maps and struggles with location.

Men in khaki shorts and Cubs hats surround us in the otherwise free zone known as Damen Ave.

Soon I won't be able to afford a car, because it's always getting towed.

Invisible electric fences follow us wherever we go, our bodies constituting foreign trade zones.

There's a skate park under the overpass. I know some kids who love freedom.

We ask for water in tall glasses. The water is free, and the tallness seems a luxury.

I am always just exiting Regal Cinemas, wishing I could go back to the show.

When Your Brother, Who Is in Jail Again

--a poem written from myself to myself

when your brother calls to say his fists are turning into thieves
and your niece is a sweet collection of thrushes and wrens

you should take notes so that you can understand the curve
of his reasoning

you must accept that indeed you come from a long line of wounds

return to your village and open up The Book of the Mumbling Dead

reading is
your last good way of saying your name without it hurting

your name: *all the flowers that are edible*

after all you come from a line of chefs

open to the page lined with
*there are always
already and only
three true outcomes:*

the fox to the hare, the splinter to the sea, and the unsure thing

eventually you will understand the voices of the sand in the rocks
and theorize houses as an attraction of bricks

there are so many things that don't make sense

like the timid girls wandering onto the private beach
like your body, irresolute and shaped by food

if you can accept your deceased
pulling their chairs up to your table to eat

if you can accept the rain as just another pattern happening

you can begin to indent your belief

after all you come from the sea

Some Things Last a Long Time

A poorly-lit joy rolls once on its back in the green grass. It gets up and stalks forward on shotgun legs as if it is an old joy or there is something up the butt of this joy. In the light, a golden-brown joy squeezes its butt cheeks between two green bushes. The butt of joy is a photo framed in a pale wooden fence.¹ A panorama of trees and middle-class houses in the middle-class sunlight. Light here is so tilted, it could make you sick. Joy is sniffing, no eating, something in the green grass. Joy is consuming the world.² Blue sky, boring house behind boring fence. Joy run-stalks, circles a tree. Joy lifts its leg to honor the tree. Joy tells the tree: "You belong to me, Tree, we are wedded in joyous urine." Grass is running, trees are flying, there are blocks for sitting and for playing. Who would sit when you could be a pair of butt cheeks staring at the world from between green bushes? Or a whole joy stalking as if an old joy or there is something up the butt of this joy. A bow-legged joy. Feet moving up and down and forward at the same time, which is a sort of miracle.³ The walking, the seeing. A sniffing of shadows, while a shadow watches joy from behind. The shadows stay a long time. The face of joy opens, dropping a pink thing into the world.

1 This dog is boring. I'm sorry, Dear Poet, if this is the dog you love and wrote about. Really, I prefer cats. They're just so weird, you know?

2 I'm still bored. I like dogs, but in bursts. Once again, I'd really prefer a cat.

3 Dear Poet, I apologize. I haven't read your book, but this is a good exercise. Thanks!