

Chris Suda

## Mother's Nursery

I stop my day to watch her work the ground.  
Her father's garden formalized the home  
I'll never know too much about. Her time

tended his behind doors made of more than just  
wood; grandma always watched through the porch screen.  
I stop my day to watch her work the ground.

The clay unmask her hands for me, the air  
sorting each finger sketched in womanhood.  
I'll never know too much about her time

when she was twenty-four, my age, smoked out  
by the matter-of-fact tenor in his voice.  
I stop my day to watch her work the ground.

She's humming now. Her lips purse together  
as she lures hydrangeas toward the terse clay.  
I'll never know too much about her time

spent waiting to hear good news about  
each time he slipped past life's cold back and forth.  
I stop my day to watch her work the ground—  
I'll never know too much about her time.

## A Musician Never Has it Made

*"A man's will can be his paradise, but it can also be his hell."*  
—Icelandic Proverb

Too late to question what the dream had meant  
we stood on stage, naked, feeling their pulse.  
Trimmed light falls off the stage then on to me,  
I think *they all just want to be impressed.*

Naked, we stood on stage, feeling their pulse  
Without a need to know who's watching us.  
They all just want to be impressed. I am  
The figure waiting patiently to be drawn

without the need to know who's watching me.  
A jester life just turns a man into  
a figure waiting patiently to be drawn.  
We're on the table etherized, undone

by jesters framing artists into some-  
thing raw or sortable for them to taste.  
We're on the table etherized, undone  
until we notice strings of clapping palms

turned raw between a sortable array  
of Jack, Jamison, nearly every need.  
Until they notice strings of clapping hands  
we won't be singing songs too long tonight.

## Late Fall Pruning

My profit was her innocence. Each shade  
of staying power she tossed me mimicked  
the paint against our walls. The war was still  
alive in us. We hid each other's youth  
between our tongues. The dew leaning against  
the grass began to slip inside the breeze  
above the yard. At the Sycamore's girth,  
wisteria secures then digests its  
coat, edging rows into the bark. Strands of  
our lives began to wing around the dead  
flowers beginning to undo themselves  
perfectly. Inside the house no blinds will  
saw the light, but flaws outsell themselves ten-  
fold. I forget some birds have useless wings.

## Facing Point

I took it all down; leaving nothing to be left  
removed: the space between  
our shins, wrists  
even the  
gaps between dwell times of  
the subway doors (perhaps even loss is lending  
Me more time.) *Some things are overdue-grown thin* she  
lipped while letting her cauli-  
flowered cheeks  
fall atlas  
flat against her barreled  
knuckles. The hallmark of this trip was stained clear when  
my eyes were stapled to a baby boy gumming  
his mother's hair, peering  
at all the  
foreign such-  
and-such with-  
out a concern of clarity, without even  
a finespun whimper to the palpable god which  
held him up. At that point  
I felt the  
subway doors  
sock shut, and recalled when  
innocence ran a soundproof film across my eyes.

## His Rope and Darling Chair

First, there was a kink below  
your chin inside that aging house

we all rumored as home.  
You scaled your final stairs

unobserved by all  
of us together

at the table,  
eating supper,

telling jokes  
then chewing

with our  
mouths closed.

Your image hurried off  
too quick for me to

answer back.