

Elena Botts

slow-rise

grey, huddled side by
side, houses in procession,
nearly fidgeting for space,
half-shuttered windows squinting
to stars burning above
a neighborhood blackened in charcoal night
the people inside
in separate corridors
fogged lights flickering
like dim ghosts fading
in and out
a man lying on the floor
his breath coming up
geysers of agitation
as he churns in wakefulness
inches from
another through the wall
who in dismal lamplight
peruses a volume
sleep unattainable,
time has become
a haunting companion,
a link through the tenement wall
that seems like not so much a separation
rather, a dawning association

a retreating glacier

you have dilapidated landscapes
with the staccato of your cracking fingertips
by the sea-sickening tilt of your backbone
the tremors of your eyes in atmospheric heat
they melt, dissolve, fall through
the shifting of you
leaves purpled obelisks
in perilous position
slopes carved by
the dissolution of one creation
until by the webbed branches of a leaning tree
on the mountainside, each ancient feature has been
in dawn distinctly wrought by unique relation

the fish in the deep
can hear me breathe
currents willed

why would you strike him
am I part of your structure
toppling your civilizations

still we sleep
in separate oceans
deepen dreams
ebb tide inhalation

I've been to playgrounds
submerged in darkness,
I've seen her
and her and her and her

and maybe you
sometimes

I can here the bonds breaking
civilization never lasts
it crumbles, it churns
it plummets fathoms
quicker than your eye
in mine

such
a distance
a bridge fallen into ruin
embraced by tide
in every aspect differently manifested
these waves carry onward the ghost

all of the time

i woke to trees
growing in my brain
i cannot feel any-
thing but steady
root expansion
some days,
i just stand here
holding a warped mirror
you point out something i've done
what color does your mind
turn when you see
a world reflection in me
what space does the world
owe to anyone
i'm a nonentity
been living on shelves, coat hangers and bird feathers
hook myself to the sky,
try to
pull it down
through the vast chambers branched from the
halls of my spine
i call myself
everything
outside, ethers merge
into inner ropes and bonds
the sky has fallen
into me

i am spread on ironworks

can i evaporate,
suffuse in summer night,
then collect
in trickling pipes,
sink through your veins
to the foundation of your brain

you in your emblazoned clothes,
you flick your wrist, bring your hand up
i don't know you
or anybody
you're just a sun in my eyes

your face is
a bullet in my mind
crimson flowers
from my head, behind

forever
we've been swimming alongside
immersed in each other
individuals by unique refraction
in this mutual river