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Apprenticeship

The machinist says, *you are its role model.*
But in its limb-knowing mind could I also be misconstrued?
Out of the greenest life-teeming tree, the squirrel seems lost

in a thicket of string quartets.

Stars will not wake up to guide it
back to the burrow of shadow by the gully's edge
where its passel was born.

As far as light is concerned, practice patience.

I Can't Rest

From fragments of a time unspooling like clouds thinning back into air's morning.
Now as I stare through a world remote as memory, opening the lock screen on my phone.
Other people unspool from this window, foregrounding the sound of a truck's engine
braking. The past comes rushing back.

I'm small again, remembering Bille, whose dad had just died, standing
in my mother's classroom and did his dad being a ghost mean that Bille could now
initiate the deconstructive work of a boyhood of being
ignored? Bille had just moved here from PA, his mom a young widow and now aid,
do they matter, does the fact that I followed behind him with my sister
in one hand dragging our trumpet cases with the other through the snow
like fresh kill matter, does it matter we heard his brother, also named Bille,
make mention of the electric field, matter, or that I didn't understand how
science was an art of conversation, which I never mastered anyway, matter, none of which
explains the tenses in which stars shine and how eventually I would learn
of all the grammatical compounds, I am the conjunctive one, or how
a poem is already one moment in a long story most of which will end
up expired thus forgotten in the background of fog, of words uttered that waste
their motion, none of which explains the spring's first glinting through the budding oaks,
none of which explains back when there were payphones as when Rasmus
who might have taken his life called me in Madrid from a booth in Århus and grew restless
in avid disorder of the heart and hung up.

Novel, I was energetic then, a towhead in a white, tight-fitting tee, no idea who I was
or wanted to be, inhaling hashish smoke in slow motion from a soft apple.

Differences

Our past takes on opposites. Take the mornings when we solved everything and leave the ones we didn't. Recounting childhood traumas in that certain voice, the unexpected sex when we see eye to eye. Alas, other things set their own trajectory, like the ghost of light sinking in this cracked passenger window and the snow my daughter grows up in a Swedish Polaroid brought to me with the mail.

The opacity of sky gives way from hesitant to harsh, changing the location of the *encinitas*. A nest inside the inside of feeling. You want me to say breasts crest to meet lips and wave while I am craving a mask of silk elusive as three aliases. Longing to part the veil, I watch you dreaming there. to dream of the voice blooming I am only sort of using you to tell my story.

Meanwhile I bend *you* back into *youth* and then we died a little death and it became a fit subject for a poem. Time slows and we enter a sunlit canvas of Matisse. Joy comes upon us, a corona of palm fronds in green oil about us sinking the sun because California constantly swells and the day curves without us noticing. But your dog notices even when sleeping in the backseat. This parking space feels tight. Thus and so I am at ease in the center of your body, an ocean of secret and whispering between clavicles, an ocean sound, my hand covering yours to keep the swallow from threshing out. The seams of the Pacific grow in you fevering a motion thus. Embracing as we are tight above the gearshift refusing to come alive, our bodies remain fixed as a bowstring, the bow drawing out our stringy touch, near motion, sticky breath you later called palpable. And then you swallowed earthward.

Today we are as synonymous as *mischief* and *mistress*. How we add up our angles and corners, how the embroidery of your spine calls to mind a clavier, how your bright mind turns me onto new positions. In hindsight I'd have said we, only by likeness, could be close like this. Like the laughter nestling in our mouths, it foregrounds the incidental metronome of Nelly snoring as we endure an overweight letter carrier's chagrin about our *indecenty* in the post office parking lot.

Eventually

I go visit Murray and we roam
the trailer park, drinking in the sustaining air
dazzled by sleet. This is how we've decided to spend a night
under Maine's street lamps.

The fox crosses a bank of snow. A flash of eyes
of the earth behind him. (Something he says? Our emissary?)
And this is what an old friend's message is for –
a set of fixed eyes reflecting when it's too hard to stay in one place.

You ask where I go even when you can see me.
I repeat the motion of his words closely
and it sounds like a plea, a summoning. Close,
close like shared moments too numerous to name.

Who were we then that even now
our chatter gives the notes I tune my daydreaming voice to?
We love the unknown sound in a word.

The fox, with our names
in its jaws and our future in its stomach,
coughs us up in his bark:
part phlegm, part phone,
part bone, part poem,
part space and the rhythm
of wind and snow, part speed.

There is a dead language buried in his snowbank, a word
neither of us remembers
for the sound of glower, of dried bud burning
in foil. It dissolves into the seed
syllable. When we are buried
in snow the word will sprout an *aah* sound.
Its meaning will change each winter
before its alphabet is swept flat by a wave of snow. I wouldn't
mind if it snapped us frozen in it.

Just beyond the last beech there is the sound
of truck engines braking like thunder and I want the sound
to return me to myself, to transform this full-grown indecision
for good.

Of Freilassing's Sun, I Have Notes

I pedal my bicycle through the one note hum the meadow makes, its plumage heavy with fragrance. It is June so the meadow has blossoms, lilac or dandelion. The cirrus pitched clouds move apart. The wind plunges its feet into bales of heat. Aphids and caterpillars were out too, defined in these moments of difference, like the butterfly carrying the bright vestiges of its former selves constellating the meadow's tines, splitting, and sticking together. Glaring scarcities of a fused life, to fuse its thoughts to that of cocoon, of exertion it calls time, like there's never enough of it and all that.

Making from yesterday's leftover rain the sound of its wings: the sparrows' hydraulic shriek. It opens a larger sough in the dale's beech. The cicada perforates a bullfrog's song out from where the hairy oak scissors one of its arms into a graceful, indecipherable sentence. The wash and spill of peace extends from the strict society of the dead. Its measure is by means of an old, organic equation the long way from Neuschwanstein to the heart of this meadow in uncertain delineation of the Alps' idea of geometry in the mind of the dandelion. Or lilac.

The no-see-ums' continue their affair with essence. Sitting by the river, massaging his bare feet together as if wanting to show you everything you might have missed, Murray in lederhosen whistles with an arrested peace, thus settling a score for the beech, lilac, and dandelion.

Crossing my path, a woman wobbles by on rollerblades.

Dead owl on the asphalt, this is not the place to teach us what the sky can pull off. Yet there you are clear as day, so necessary as the stars in their insanity shining above your feathers ruffling a little against the scalene polygonal crop of stone stepping out of its grey dress into midsummer's fabric of weather.

We Meet in Greece

A stippled moon of pedigree lodges into place. It is abiding there. It crafts landscape of midnight's cloth. And here you are at the sea's mouth, your body entire turning

like the wind. Wind pushed into our mouth. It perches above the vastness of sand chewed through by spume's of the Ionian water in this God-blue night.

It's wet, drenched, aquatic. Moving water making the sea a joy to hear. Suspending a riven pendulum and endless sapphire. A place to go into from the earth cracking the convex pane of your eye, we stealth-step in the glare of, adhering to its hectic surface.

The electric sun whispering

in smeared motes of jasmine scent and pincushion flower near the tendril hem of the cobbled trail of componentry where we kneel at the places rivers split behind a scone of cloud.

Rain in the shape of the river, of a broken lock that remained a rift, sound merged holding this moment river-still. What if this was our life, where one wave becomes another lost, unmapped, reciting that we are what produces itself, sanded and cast adrift. Teal water seeps up our spine, making us less than heavy.

You and I are dirty with scent.

The stripped-down. The drizzle of sound through the endless does wash ashore.

The lavish. The striped. Maybe we have been here and are tired of being surprised.

Maybe we shared a mouth to speak through, free of the mind becoming the soundless slip that covers a mouth, lowered over the slack sea clutching at the spaces that are not there and needing a slipknot, a tightening, for the tide to drink up the shore. It vomiting it up again. A sign of devotion. Or resurrection. Are the lives that have tried to complete me in waiting.

An ambulating pause in eye-opening reveals a brief wound of serrated light dissipating back into sea memory as it becomes sky again.

Open your mouth, show me rows of jagged teeth foregrounding evenly with your ear to speak for the shell's impress announcing the calligraphic coast's dithyramb:

skin in marble, Byron's incipient eye in stone, burning seraphic we are bathed in milk, singing in the asphodel meadow's in seam becoming voracious and lit. Look at me holding you, an eidetic thing, trying to find the words for sight, blinking, and letting go. Pressing one finger between your eyes resisting the fragile retina. What trove of meaning could it ascribe?

Blooming ghosts setting free jackasses from their constant milling—the rasp of the rusty hinge's gate, how the locks of our hometown are all broken—I laugh, they bloom

from between yellow teeth white primroses butting their blunted heads against
the cliffs of the Ionian through a dignified croft of wheat that is theirs.

How bougainvillea

still finish your sentences into the suitable honeycomb language of the sky. Its opaque
curve, a crippled moon's oblation echoes one echo in two that the moon is the moon's
palest syntax closing crescent-like and trapping itself in a bead of sweat on your neck
I try to collect with my mouth, leaning
my discalced itinerary of language into a language made of salt air.

You

are now synonymous

with the island, synonymous with the open-mouthed moon with impossible offerings.

I look up into its human face, a temple plume conjugated by the season
into a seafoam ether lurking among the night of your hair.

Nothing so much as the sepal looms combing the air, and so

it makes sense to meet here combing your hair with an open palm
held out, we embark on our self-spun short story multiplying and moving
toward something other than ourselves.

A giant phantom fed on by people and flowers. An immense seashell.

Let's let the sea that rains light down have the last word,
and what short night stories cross the breadth and width of November.
Almond-blossoming foam, dream-sea selves risen, this feeling of collapse
and what are we who hail nothing.

Lazy Acres

Right beneath us wasps are drawing up their plans for a nest. So many of our guests do not remove their shoes. We ignore the apparitions as the high sun plays the same tune on the accordion of light entwining the meadow filled with blossoms and ticks and now and then blood rusty stakes, which is good for the rakes to knit the minutes together in spider silk.

We do not much of anything, letting the guests' gossip serve as an axis hyphenated by birds snarling the garden chain link the thrushes gloat in and out from, body from body, speech to speech just as needles knit the grove full of metaphor in plain sight moving the plot deeper into heat.

Us, as usual, between the narrative of water wearing nothing but courage.

We are too tired to praise anything. Another wet dawn and light knives beauty. We brush our teeth with garden hose water at dusk, the crick keeping time with nothing. We do not much of anything and call it romance, as if this wilding were intentional.

If there are fruit blossoms in the knotted limbs, I tell myself the neighbor's yard work is to thank. All the while the crick water is headed for the sackcloth of congressing clouds.

Crickets drawing symphonic moons around themselves dissolve all over the caustic lawn.

I place my hand on your heart. We need so much protection, needed by the body. We stand barefoot in the wet grass watching the wasps creep through the warped boards the weather broke loose as if trying to lift the porch. No one even cares.

The summer rain takes its first dip through the leaves. It's so late in the season and you turtle into me for a crick swim, explaining water is only one way to apprehend the air. The dusky summer unfurls as a wild wet star of stagnant water, lustrous and nervous with our lips wide open letting in the bright language to keep our body's water in check. The drinkable rain parts like a path of escape. You can't step in the same mouth twice. You are an attempt to fill my face with thoughts as kind and neat and unshaking as you are the light in my mouth. You surface with hair tangled with river twigs and wire and chance. The equinox sizzles there behind you. Both mouths and cricks are mostly water. We've held space for stagnancy. A romantic stagnancy we call water.

Bodum

Space organizing itself when you have limited time. Our daydreams, in the highest tract of air, replace the stained sunlight hovering above the coffee grinder's ignoble cord at the kitchen's island. So it requires patience, an extra stoop.

You, mostly a pattern of motion, a village in which a leaf, also you, scatters without the confusion. Translucent in that timelessness, we drink mug after mug of inky noise. The cirrus-shape of your motion becomes the leaf pile we jump into

next season
echoing the kinesthesia
of one echo in two.

Our miracle, we who those days were the centrifugal moment, a knot in future memory before the Great Water parted us. Language shared our perspective pinned to air. The air we breathe the birds use for flying. We are easy in the weather of our home star.

Will we ever come back to now?
That summer we were content to walk in an unlocked sunlight leaning in to leaf-shaded grass. The grass inside the song

stains us with the thick shape of foot-falling warmth under the periwinkle pinned there, prolonging the monotony of a bursting. Percussive, it runs in a glare beyond the yard's tracery blooming horizon

thus making us crave the kinesthesia of change with each step to give everything its exact measure in color. Marking the transition between learning and knowing. Why not start with the whole note, an aroma of green steadying itself on a long swimming pool ripple.

The lung-shaped leaves of borage reopening the body to its breath in green and a special blue going into all of us and I winced before our special Labrador's long, sad decline riding the feathers of a comet into the world.

Absence makes the particle move faster. We still hoped for the miracle that summer. We were one with the yard evasive as silence, a commotion of sound and form, a fluent green blaze we wonder about ourselves

framing the burning seat of our proffered balcony behind the constant gentleness of leaves. How much has the world turned

since you were a girl in the Isole Tremiti with a carnation twisted in your hair?

Seeing each other in the future is better than the pasture.

When the time came, I saw your pupils dilate as when losing love
another window opens, taking auspices. Even stooped, if we let our eyes cut open

and close then open in a tear, it wouldn't matter.

The wayward girl goes no longer reclaimed. To be your brother
is to solve the problem of perpetual motion and I was losing

you in real time to a quarantined affection on another balcony to live out the last
of your youth in that cold, hard-to-reach place. Lovely to be both
wave as well as particle, so do our minutes hasten to their end.

But even though you leaving made me wince, dredge up tears, we still found ourselves glad
and in motion. I was losing myself in real time, letting you go with the half of me
that said goodbye when I meant to say how come.

It is important to go on naming things even if all I said to you that summer was *light, light, light*.

Some Random Sense of Beginning

I disagree that autumn means the sun becomes less full of itself. Itself being mystical, a penumbra band of gold with ideographic characters. For there are all these moment-to-moment things going on cast in their vat of bluing on the backyard's line teleprompting the wilds of my shirt tails to fall in love with the wind. Arranging in a delicate latticework the wind said I've begun to whisper louder. "My breath is an axis hyphenated by the air birds fly on."

The wind said I mistrust the orange furnace up there never singeing its blue marble hearth.

Whereas, I've recalled instinct by draping my face with the day's light of her hair, a green light hovering above the louder swish of my own heart beating wrong and stunned before the slashing arms of the sun. Slashing being embracing.

I'm dallying after anonymity's arabesque forming a slip eternal. Now the I am gets tangled up in the wild winds summoned from sleep. Whispered wordings that waste their motion. I must lead the mesmeric trance by streamlining my own inarticulate self in reticence to a ghost I pray will follow. A truce to prayer, enough soft words. I am a grown, bipedal creature telling the same story with an ellipsis trailing behind me back inside. A squall blowing me back into myself gone slack.

All this placating amid the heavy tally of the day's assiduous swoon of domesticity — a damp shirt, heavy and loose as if it had vomited up a small stone— shirttails playing out two kinds of forgetting: one consumed by desire, one released from it.

All this afternoon I thought of my life as a light running the length of line in faint satin script. I saw it as a wand woven into a ring to tether words. It unspools what we've saved up to say. It's me from another dimension. The same desperation in a sweating day. Sweating to spend the rest of our lives apart. The dumb thing I said to her isn't in the poem.

Mercy

The front porch can't breathe, dead lilac stems are choking the life out of the mulch, the bird house itself is crushed to pieces in the yard, the geese are leaving, the flies won't fly, the sidewalk cement is hot, the water in one of my summer jars has disappeared, and I am trying to scratch one of my triceps without splitting the scab leftover from the mosquito though it is painful sitting like this and turning in this heat; and there is a half-alive green lacewing stirring my cup of tea and there is a heap of rotting leaves at the step above which I sit holding my notebook to the thwarting light like someone did under the limbs of an apple tree once and nod with a quivering lip of mercy – for all the animals in flux I guess – and wipe my eyes and turn to the widowed branches and I pick up the rake to rake out the muckheap at the bottom of the step through the filtered light in and out and waving a little like the glass jar I pick up next and turn

a little like how I face myself now—