

## **i. Painting**

Painting is not always a product  
of expensive paint and temperate bristles  
and talent and expertise

sometimes, it comes from the gravity  
the weight of the paint on the brush propelling it forward  
the wind that comes at the precise moment you need it to

the accidental flick of the wrist  
the unannounced water droplet  
the pigment of imagination

painting is not always a product  
sometimes it is a circumstance

## ii. Baltimore

These cobble stones tell secrets  
if you listen very carefully  
they rumble at you about the horses that  
galloped on their surface

the brick stones tell stories  
late at night when no one is listening  
they remind you of long ago fires  
and misshapen nails being hammered in

the water is here  
the same water that Frederick Douglass worked along  
the same water that houses male ducks and their mistresses, souls, sailboats, and the wheel  
the same water that welcomed ships home in 1853

The Domino Sugar factory's sweetness  
that is indeed plumes of white smoke  
lies as a beacon of a lighthouse  
And endless twinkle lights in the dark blue night  
swinging this way and that from one window pane to another  
across the narrow streets, swooping like a lady's fine pearls  
illuminating the stoops, the rats, the little free public libraries  
the ancient pathway of Edgar Allan Poe shining in their brightness

Baltimore is crabs, craft beer and baseball games  
Baltimore is quiet and loud and new and monotonous all at once  
A good monotonous, the kind that is your daily routine  
The monotony you don't want to end fueled by articulated lattes  
Baltimore is Orange and Purple doors  
and sirens, fresh air and ice cream  
it is small, yellow, wooden salt boxes on every corner

Baltimore is a charm that belongs on every bracelet  
a giant city rolled into one neighborhood  
etched in every memory  
of our collective unconscious

it will tell you stories  
if you listen to it

### iii. moving, an interruption

is it the physical location  
or the transitory period that's the hardest?

a house looks different  
based on who isn't in it anymore  
an empty counter sans coffee pot, a quiet TV, a missing laugh

where are my tweezers?

it's funny how it's not about the gifts at Christmas  
give me a banana wrapped in shiny paper, i told my mom  
it doesn't matter what's inside anymore

just being together is enough  
my stuff is packed in boxes

did i pack my toothbrush?

when there's a different vantage point  
you learn to be resourceful  
you really only need one plate and one set of silverware to get by

you learn to tough out the tough times  
surrounded by cardboard boxes and packing tape

where are the house keys?

and with those times, your hands get rough and your lips get chapped  
and the bags under your eyes carry all of your emotions and belongings that your suitcase can't fit

was selling the blender supposed to feel like selling your soul?  
it's just a blender, i told myself  
a blender

but it wasn't just a blender  
it wasn't just a set of margarita glasses  
it was not simply a forgotten lamp  
and it was never just a set of French bulldog salt and pepper shakers

these items did things  
they held things  
they supported things  
they *were* things  
you know?