

***Portrait of Olivia, Age 9***

I love that Humboldt-ish,  
evening-ish, rainy-fish smell,  
says the little blonde girl  
with rapture on her face,  
rainbow shoes on the wrong feet  
below ruffled mismatched clothes,  
hair a cloud of jumbles  
glasses smudged with sweat.

Peers run through the gym door  
reckless past the parked cars  
deaf to scolding parents  
blind to all except each other.  
Alive with middle childhood  
they shoot lasers from their fingers,  
flying imaginary spacecraft  
whizzing past made-up planets.

Only she lives on the ground,  
eyes up to the heavens,  
scanning first for Venus  
then smitten by the moon.  
Aware of countless wonders,  
the all-thing's elaboration  
too vast for calculation  
lives reflected in her mind.

***Drowning***

Tonight, she told me she can't stand the chaos of not having family rules and sticking to them. They provide structure she clings to, pulls herself up by to keep her head above water.

Plenty to drown in when the world deems you unemployed despite night and day work. Manager of everything, she somehow remains low man on the totem pole so others can rise.

Best keep chins up when the hoard and the bickering run deep, careering down the hallways. Best keep eyes forward when the past looks the same, the same, the same, the same.

***My Lens***

She is more vast,  
she is more deep,  
she is more rich,  
than I could ever conceive.

The all-thing knows her well -  
her quarks and her chemistry,  
her mass and her time,  
her here and her gone.

Only through my sense  
does her hair smell like happiness.  
Only through my touch  
does her skin feel like eternity.  
Only through my eyes  
do her eyes look like all potentials.  
Only through my lens  
does it see her whys, not her whats.

I must persist.  
I must persist that the all-thing  
should find inside my everything  
a glimpse of its most precious thing.

***Tiny Castles***

we are sand  
water  
held together  
tiny castles  
fragile order  
highest purpose  
speck of time

***Watching***

He watches her sleeping -  
not much time, just enough -  
then wakes her from dreaming  
to the struggle ahead.

He watches his dancer  
getting their breakfast,  
teaching her how,  
not doing for her.

He watches the time  
as they pass it together,  
listening and speaking,  
sharing their thoughts.

He watches her strain  
with the awkward tight outfit,  
helping but barely,  
letting her learn.

He watches her cry  
as her hair comes together,  
a cloud of potentials  
now fit for her purpose.

He watches her go  
as she jogs on without him,  
excited and focused,  
ready and sure.

He watches and waves  
til she's clear through the door  
never once glancing back.  
There was just enough time.