

Childless

There's a slab patio out back
Ringed by greenery in the spring
A half brick wall then green hills
Neighbors as far as we can see
A rickety cafe table, rusty grill
Too tight for swings, for slides
It's quiet in the parking lot
Quiet next door
Quiet on down the row
Inside the doors, wisps of tea
Clinking tiles, shuffling footsteps
Out front one ball rolling down the walk
One bike twisted on its side
One streak of pink chalk
Just one shriek around the corner

Carousel

There's a carousel at the river
She rides the mermaid
Long haired and pale
She wants ice cream running down the cone
Heated by the gleaming glass to her back
Yet there's ashes in the alleyway
Showering us at night
There's fire in the window
Licking us at dawn
She plays hide and seek in the galleries
Painted boys draped in dresses
Carved wood set like bone
For her, there's nothing here but us
For this city, we're nothing
Here, footsteps echo on marble - there's emptiness to come
Her uniform's pressed, her name is heard about the halls
Yet, paint streaks off the yellow cinder block
Just one flaxen head
Our floors are polished, our driveway gated
Yet, outside stone and glass and wood are lying about
Are crunched, disregarded
We are not hope

Grace at home

At the edge, bright lights soft through my window
In the dark, in the arrow of light,
Traffic hums, hums tomorrow

Pale brick rounds me, and for me, this city
This tiny oval near the river
This bowl about to be flooded
Rounds the outer charred edges still alive
There's still room for peace
So many empty fields overgrown
Yet willful anger spatters in the red light
To the north, to the west
Here, grace in the ruins, in the space,
In the rush, in the crowds
Grace here in the oasis