to fear men in white suits

i once knew this girl -

well.

i've heard stories of a girl like the moon pulsing with vitality, intoxicating in theory

but distant , reserved to the point

that men in white suits were catapulted to the stars

to see if She endured

but when they reached Her

in all Her divine glory

they mistook Her for property and claimed her as Their own.

They turned her into cattle,

these Men in white suits

transfigured her into a ribbon, a prize

and paraded her about

a rusted bit clamped between her teeth

meant to staunch her verbose divinity

from proclaiming our promised demise

They boasted her to the world

but never once thanked her for providing

the ground which They stood the ground which They claimed

she remains uncredited,

observed, and

Silent.

tonight, she sits poised, just out of reach chained by a flag she was never meant to bear taken hostage by white men in suits that refuse to acknowledge her in all her captivating fullness. her face stepped on , destroyed her beauty rebranded so we may forget

who she is

so , honorably i will stand beneath her purple-dark sky

tonight
and every night
i will stand beneath Her for hours, unwavering
awed by Her glow

drenched in American Beauty.

my ghosts golden

psychedelic paintings of backward lips of words like color hanged sweet from a checkerboard swaying back and forth like metronome fortune like harp string souls and guitar pick minds

they strum against your chest like dandelion thorns like welding-fire souls

setting ablaze dead fields of

once-wases and never-to-bes

that sprout skyward from carcass hearts raised under the dew of dying moons and her first tears and his last breath and empty memories of maybe-love lost

things she won't remember missing

'did you know that i've had these flowers since 1986?'
my grandmother asks
as she waters the plants
hidden inside her maze of a garden
beneath a warm, brewing sky
and a hat to hide her age from the sun
a semisweet tang in the air
as she shuffles through the overgrown

'no, i didn't.'
i say as

she tugs and tugs and tugs on the green garden hose as it grows taut, curling around the bend like the serpent in Eden she used to know, wrapped around the tree she can't remember circling over and over again

she smiles at me across the brush

as if we share a secret

but we can't share secrets if she keeps forgetting them

'you okay, grandma?' i ask as

she turns

and she looks at me, her smile gr owing wider and w ider

the water pooli ng around her socks

and the browning, neg le cted garden of her mind

screaming through the silence of her smile

for just a taste of the water she forgot w as there

'how long have you been here?

come help me water the garden.'