

Best Years Sestina

Two weeks in Alabama have been unearthly and sweet.
Here, there are only churches, bungalows, and hot sun.
Every old lady is my grandmother, storing their best
Tarts in bright plastics. Old men selling melons are replaced by
New sons, unsure of adulthood, scared to shed
Their protective carapace. I wonder if armadillos get scared too.

My old home in Florida where I slept until one or two
Had perennial sedges that grew long and lapped, sweet,
Against my hips and legs. And a metal tool-shed
That had no tools but sat by the lake to bake under the sun.
That had long bending roads. A good place to drive by.
A good place to die and wither and brown—the best.

In Florida there is a photo of my dad during his best
Years, a nice reminder of where he has fallen and risen to.
In America, my father can mow his lawn and buy
Things from a supermarket. My mother can bake sweets
And learn to swim with her daughter and son.
They drive an electric car, with nothing more to shed.

The internet told me that dogs shed
In the spring, but that the best
Ones don't shed at all. The sun
glows too bright and all I want is a dog to
Share the heat, to share the sweet
Bitterness of summer, to help the time pass by.

In my biography the by
line will be blank—better to shed
that information. Do not let others know of my sweet
home, my sweet Florida, my best
friend. The rest of my childhood, too,
will remain a secret, even to my newborn sons.

The sun
goes by.
A Tues-
day shed.
Biting into Grandma's best
cakes—so sweet.

Goodbye: my home sweet,
My wilted grass, my best
years. One day, we will all be moved to the shed.

3 Poems on Love

1.

In a wicker chair
over poured whiskey
I sit.
The others have gone

to gather firewood
and cut melons.
I hear crickets whispering
secret messages.

Another drink,
a few things become clear:
I am hungry
I have lost my phone
and I am in love.

2.

On the first day
we drank coffee
phones away
talking and smiling.

On the second day
we watched a movie
and when the other
wasn't looking we
watched each other.

On the third day
we fought.

On the fourth day
we fought.

On the fifth day
we fought.

3.

"Fuck you,"
she explained.

Cave-Men

What is it? he asks, palming
A mystical red sedan,
His black locks blowing in
Unfamiliar wind. I answer,

It is like a horse.
He wrinkles his brow the way
Clueless fathers do. He follows me
Between the iridescent blocks.

As we talk, skyscrapers
Become mountains, Groceries
A grange, and streetlights,
Simply lit flames.

No longer a brute, he speaks again:
What has happened?
Nothing, I reply, and that
Is the unbroken
 truth.

We are like you, I tell him, no different from before—
Two-footed mammals, still hunting and gathering.