

Grandpa

There were spaces between the lines by his eyes, I remember
From pictures? I believe from life, ten years ago, the solar system reflecting in his eyes.
I remember—not enough, but moments here and there—the oxygen tube was draped over him
and we struggled to remove it, both of us
Grandma came in and it took her a few seconds
He was confused, a victim of age and I, as well, but me with being eight and generally
unknowledgeable and him with being seventy-six and propelled by a pacemaker
He took the keys and Mom was afraid, she told me later
We went to get ice cream and I was happy—I would assume, but memory fails me, once again,
as age had us weakened on different ends of the spectrum.

February, 900 miles away

The trees were purple, confused, and laden with flowers after a week of warm weather
The neighborhood reeked of a springtime that wasn't due for another month
I stopped in front of a red hibiscus hedge when Mom got off the phone and she told me he had
died
No more butterfly kisses and no more ice cream trips
Just pictures and memories, and then
Just pictures.

Ambition

she is a serious daydream
her breath sticks to the hairs on my neck
when I wake up there are dewdrops on the terrace and
she's there watching for inconceivable expectations—
the sunrise, bees and hummingbirds

I'm standing but so is she, taller than yesterday's regrets,
streamers of orange laughter dancing in her shadow
the landscape roils and sunlight splashes out
to mingle with her thoughts in the atmosphere

her dreams scatter with pollen on the wind,
propelled by the humming of a bee or a song,
soon to bring flowers to an empty land

now the dewdrops are dry and Venus is gone
and she turns around, hair like candle flame
as she walks toward me, I sit
thinking she will too
before I remember that she prefers to fly

Two Dresses

Two dresses

Two tuxedos

too much symmetry is sickening, I suppose.

Two hands of the same size don't fit together as well
but yours fit fine, held up in condescending prayer.

A single rose represents love stronger than hatred
but you seem to have lost the rose for the thorns.

Hide it, disguise it—
why?

Do you not wish to see us in our heathen glory?
Feel free to avert your eyes, because what is out of sight remains out of mind
but God can see everything, you've told me; God hates us

and what a supreme coincidence it is, that God's
hatred
aligns
with
yours.

Is it disgust that brings you to bring us apart?
to split off our rings with wire-cutters and desaturate our rainbow flags
until all that is left is red, white, and blue America
God shed his grace on thee—

we are part of this country, too.

Or is it simply too much of a burden to explain to your children why two women are kissing?