

six poems

cab

the humble ghost slides my usual cabernet across the bar
delicate fingered dark browed beak nosed
/why are you always here alone/ he doesn't ask and i don't tell him
in the last century the devils were all from eastern europe the ghost says instead
he is from romania /just like dracula/ he laughs
the ghost is a chatterbox he used to be a cab driver he says
shy grin /sorry for my english/
drove all over new york for twenty years and talked to everyone in the city
and learned american words from the radio always on
the ghost won't tell me why he stopped driving taxis or how he ended up in boston or how he started working here
in the last century all the gays were devils he says instead
/the police thought we were dangerous that we would corrupt people/
shrugs /but it's ok i've met a lot of nice boys here/
voice-spoiled grin there's a story there that the ghost won't tell me
because i'm too shy to ask we slip back into the old movements i drink from my cab
he throws himself back into his careful tending of the bar
flitting from stool to stool sipping at conversations like a slow-starved summer bee
and all of us flowers nod haughtily back at his presence over our glasses
all rotting very sweetly together

license

as i take his words into my mouth i am glad for their taste
glad they have been released and given to me

in the interval in the seconds between his texts i have time to think of a fruit in a dream garden
the serpent no longer has license to strike

the tree sheds its leaves with almost joy makes a carpet over the parking lot
he says that i am desirable that i am handsome in the office light

i want to make a fruit from the pulp of a nail the last leaf shivers and falls
it is frightening to offer myself to the tree to the fruit

it is frightening to swing the burning sword he says
and though his body is full of seeds and mine is full of shells and discarded skins we are compatible

i taste of the fruit but i don't know if i like it
or if it reminds me of the bones he crunches on sometimes when we're watching netflix

i don't mind the bones but i like much more the residues
the warm inner marrow

he wants to make a coin from the juice of the fruit
it's commerce he says that is the only infinite

they were right about the wind
it's sharp and seems to carry something that it shouldn't

the snow is worse than the sun
the trees seem almost gold in the early morning light

the snow is worse than the sun but somehow i'm drawn to it
drawn to the glint of black ice by the roadside

i dream for this
a natural enclosure a world inside a word

has our knowledge made us free /?/
and when they finally call my number do i bring water or

a portrait or a curtain or a bridge
or a conclusion /?/

to hang up our lights is always a project
there's just no place to plug them in

i am always thinking of light and time and the flashing of the messages on my screen
you cannot accuse me of inattention

i no longer have license to drive and the decision to forego renewal for so long
has consequences

clusters of possibilities whiz through our heads he says
electric charges clogged with coffee grounds and brain bits

the fruit is so easy to bring to the mouth
to seize with eager lips

he says we go to the tree with equal needs
which honestly is bullshit

we are in the habit of him on top of me of tasting and teasing
at the residual flesh

impersonal
only an animal could be so

the holy angel dashes the snake against a wall
quietly tastes of the fruit we have rejected

these are old photos he says because there's nothing else to say
it's so hard to think of her as me

a new license means a new picture a chance to more officially be the he that is really me
and so i do my best to be myself as it were and questions are easy to answer

but mistakes are hard to right

trans man is feeling blue

i am man

a man with a black beard and
a peeling bluish skin

once
my throat was

unlocked

by a broken statue of krishna

but now
i feel ticklike and mucal

jingling
with word-lice and crooked teeth

once
i was raptured into silk ropes tight around my winged past
and hairy thighs

but lately
my thought-veins have have been leaking

sivelike and pipish

i too have been broken lately

chipped and dust-fed

i too have been god lately

bruise-flowered and desperate-seeded

a broken god in the bluish body
of a man

wet dream with lord byron

i answer you and it rends me like old silk
you take me through each room

your tears red then turning slowly the color of silk
do you know why you dream of marrow ?

that's what you asked me in the long dark after sex
i survived birth

but i failed in my need
my hunger for stamens licked clean

when the long dark came you worked me
so roughly between your grey fingers

you asked how else can you beg under the red
silk buckle and heave of my need ?

rockport sunrise

nothing for us in the morning but the smear of fog bank
against the pure sky-shift of sunrise

i heard the sunlight grating against the rooftops
one morning this sound won't bother me

but this morning it did and you were there
clutching at the roots of the ocean

when i read to you last night i was listening for the
rustlings of your blood in the ugly pinking veins of your eyes

i shouldn't have spoken to you
you didn't know how drunk i was you didn't know

but you got into my bed anyway we read to each
other anyway and believed this is what delight is

like what the morning is just before sunrise
sky and sea are pinking but they're never quite the same color

as the fog