

The Armageddon Café

special: buttery cosmos
endless sides (no substitutions)

split the sky
with a neat incision
take a bite
clouds like spun sugar
twirl around your tongue,

let the sky melt in your mouth
spit birds like seeds –
rat-tat-pip-slip-tip –
hear them ding, feel the horizon sing
inside your throat

nothing that tastes this good
should be left to itself

top shelf atmosphere –
turquoise, baby, periwinkle –
made sky, then flesh,
pick pin-bone stars clean

the orange sun winks, take me too,
palate cleanser with ginger bite
not nearly as sweet as it looks

pour creamy, swirled Jupiter in a cosmic dish
of polished black,
crumble satellites like cornbread

mind the stardust,
dab your chin

once your fiery toothpick,
the filament of life now snuffed

even your God particle
the beginning unmade, a cake that never was.

Cloud Watching with the One I Love

Dragon, hammer, open scissors,
and he sees a cracked egg with wings
next to an ant hill. Lightning and steady rain

to the west and closing. We are twigs crammed
in the porch slats, and we will wait out the storm. Or not.
We are weeds grasping from the cool dirt until we find sun.

A drop hits his upper lip and we stretch out our hands.
Dry at first, but then the sky opens. This morning, a fox
waited in the ditch while a rusty truck passed. The rabbit in his mouth

flailed its last. Tattered flowers out back hang like bells
from the heavy sky. We are kites, but we always point down.
We fall towards clouds, fly into earth and stones. Look up.

A sleeping cat, old sneaker, a burning candle, but the wind takes them
and builds a black, swirling wall. Today our hearts are the wind,
our mouths twisting clouds. Tomorrow wears a new, dark dress.

Before He Became a Rapist

Remember the diner's chipped mugs?
How we pondered, and browsed and browsed,
the waitress tapped her chewed pencil,
Take your time. Carafes of coffee
and plates of sweets: muffins, silk pie,
carrot cake, hot fudge sundaes.

The servers took full, easy breaths,
filled the salt while the wiseass grill cooks
catcalled from the back. I liked
to watch the married ketchup – bottles stacked
mouth to mouth, sugared
and passionate tomato sliding
sweet and slowly down, gravity pulled –
because I was a romantic

and didn't know any better.
One is tipped to fill the other
then left empty, and that's not love,
only bleeding.

Whole Hog

Baby, you're the whole hog.
My lips smack at the thought
of you, brazen, with your salty-smoke.
Your shoulder, never cold, is tough
in all the right ways, we simmer,
we braise, but we are more than loins.

Self-Portrait as Paper Snowflake

My folded hands mirror each other
and open with a whispered crinkle.
Every day there's a new crease,
unwanted fold, tattered edge. My face
a cheerful blank, flat and pressed against
the window. My laugh is manic scissors,
my voice a rustle that collates across white
rooms. I speak cold, and you believe it.
Don't. I am twisted kindling, and in dreams
I dress in blue smoke, waltz wooden matches.