

Inadvertent Landscape

Two voices,
two black rectangles of voice,
one little lung, carpet.
They're changing the garbage in the lobby
behind him. I disagree.
The word doesn't do that.

There are Places Where We are Unwelcome

My scapula twitched and burned like a cymbal
the night she put her tongue in my ear.
The room had charisma, small appliances, nice drapes.

I forget the times she called me an asshole
and it begins to rain disfigured little faces outside.
I worry the forecast, paltry glasswares, stomach pumps,
I worry ticket stubs.

My lip cracks and bleeds on my beer can.
The black walnut tree sheds all over the lawn.
Everyone at the party smells like turpentine.

Later it feels like we're sleeping but when I close my eyes
I wake up and all I can think of is pale skin,
scissors, a playful thorn inside a quiet word,
the bird outside, one squawk of possession,
of unknowing narcissism, of breath.

Armed Only With Our Sense of Degradation as Human Beings

Our hands hold the vase that holds the train together for just
this moment before the train shatters and the clasp
is no longer a human clasp. It's a beast, or the outline of a person,
or the idea of a self as the shattered line of a wrecking train.

I feel like the vagrant who left the stolen bicycle on the tracks
to derail the train while I pissed into the screaming brush.

We Want to Have Been

Cormorant,
this word of you, afterthought of stolen
second-hand clothing, this soft public address
concerns my lungs. Your kinked neck in flight
spills the ghosts of Shane's open, soft hand,
of empty Fairbanks bottles, Stephanie's
blind eye, all over the couch. I keep slipping on them.

I wish they loved us. They used to be us:
dissolved into stretched-out moments, eating salads.
We lean on the barrel of nights' waiting tantrums.
We feel, want to become, or to have been the ghosts,
to scavenge some before-man groan of waking
under the sad little fruit trees.

Horizon

the small way the power lines divide the white-orange trees
the small way of a car alarm— distant guard-rail thin, and mad
near the overpass— a woman pulling hard on her
own hair in the breeze-pocket of a train station