

MIDNIGHT

I can accept the black moon
swinging over ink,
our arc of oil slipping across
every pair of eyes, wet
with recently recalled
memories no one wants to know.
Midnight drivers weep through
hillside mirages winding with
California truths. All stereos
whine, nothing into nothing.

Under the stone moon we relearn how to cry

No spells uttered under a black
moon. Make no love, no quilts.
Sliding through night with an
opal sense of touch, small hours
bleed into orange mornings.
There's nothing new this year.
Eyes dry without a moment
of silence to leap into. Only smells
of onion and eggs billowing
from some Sunday evening cumbia.
Ink does nothing when the sun's out,
lines mean nothing when our world
is razed by selfsame digits. Listen:
drums beating to no band, our
world's gone raucous. By now, I've
forgotten the old rhythm of sunset.

Under the ghost moon we relearn how to try

TO BE DISCOVERED

I'm doing just fine,
said the liar
to the lover.

No words after
the purple dust
of midnight can rouse
us from our warm
lives.

Nothing matters in the evening
except ink and dreams
of dead leaves curling
in some quiet wind—
everything's just fine if you lie—
everything's all right
in the placid purple
under every phase of every moon,
waxing and waning slivers
of whiteyellow apologies pull us
towards truth—if we listen
we'd rise, like so many other tides.
No, nothing is all right, nothing
except the morning bees'
thighs swollen with pollen.

Satellites around a sunflower,
or atmosphere, no matter—
they know all our failures
and buzz in condemnation.

They know
so many colors hide under the petals
of the words *I'm sorry*

HELIANTHUS AT DAWN

The ants, and aphids in tow, have returned
with wondrous malice.

As lovers of green challenges, we have no answer
for things that go brown, crisp

with tomorrow's and yesterday's fresh failures—
the sunflowers loll in the haze

uncaring of the new fusillade ripping
her leaves. (Does it hurt?)

The suns are too strong now to be concerned.
What's one leaf among palms?

The bees dance all the same, they waltz
in and leave with spirits thick

with pollen (I wish they'd teach
me that sacred groove).

The leaves do not appear to mind
the assault. (I wish they'd teach me how
to be so free

The wind moves all the same
in the haunted smoke quilting its way West.
80 miles away, terror whips through

the memories of trees. I can smell them.
The ants return—I've tried everything.

Diatomaceous earth and nematodes—they return,
the gold heads sway towards the horizon—so routine,

like the red eye above cursed with a cumulus suit.
The bees move and crawl across silk

coronas—amber infinities dressed in florets sprawl
across midsummer—and they spill nothing

during their secret tango.
I don't want to look up

like they, the sunflowers do. I understand the heads
that droop in concert with their doom
Bald and brown, life returns.

The hummingbirds cycle through the flowers, no
one interrupts their duties except other

hummingbirds, gold-throated and violent with hunger.
So much love in one patch of life, a feathered ease

calms the movers of the afternoon. The sun recedes
into the arms of smoke. Nothing

in the Garden lies

except me.

FLORETS ALWAYS FALL

The sunflowers learned nothing
because they already know
everything true or false
above and below the soil.

With no cause but *more light*
they sway in the hot wind.
As stars they reach, then fall
within the green week.

Like so many other galaxies
and supernovae, there is no
alarm, no great malignant
concern. Cosmos don't lie,

white dwarfs and watermelons,
the geniuses of ego, worry about
nothing but life and death—

so,
nothing of import

ROT

I like the flowers

even when they bow
like exhausted and brilliant
monks waiting for the shift
from now to then

I like the flowers

even when the yellow gold
goes brown, from silk to sand,
when the bees flee into their
homes empty thighed and without
any wanton choreography.

I like the flowers

losing weight and wind,
drooping, held erect by bamboo
stakes and green ribbon; now look,
Look how they stand tall in this heat!

I even like when the flowers

finally die—petals crisp with thirst
and memory shuffle in a cold wind,
soon there will be no choice but prune.

I like the flowers

bought at Trader Joe's—
The grand drama of orchids,
or the quiet dry wit of succulents
in small pots shaped like armadillos.

I like the roses

tossed in sad arcs into wet graves
filled with so many brothers. So red,
no life can compare to the whims
of perennials dropped quietly by
a boy long lost in his garden

Flowers have so little to consider:

Life, or Not Life.

I like the flowers yet to bloom—

the strugglers and sufferers
and dreamers in brave combat
with fungi and aphids,
the thirsty children reaching
for water required for the
Great Dance of the First Wind, and later

Genesis Petals. Always first, petals
to the eye. Alive, always hungry
for new and old light.