

New

Despite a razor shave and Visined eyes,
shoes and necktie tied, tied and retied
square, there's no way to duck around
the stray dogness of a done-up clown.

To be too old and both new again,
acid washed of the accretion of sin
that had long ago ceased to be
the missteps of a dork but the free

tussles of someone with his own thing —
a room with a vellum in a frame,
a door with name-slot and a name,
the kidskin impress and the doorplate same —

in other words, *damnatio memoriae*,
no one knowing his late-night gluttony
and tooth-brushing. Again he is a smile —
the starched, name-tagged, lost, and slenderest file.

Amen

One day, there will be a paper to sign.
It will come stacked casually inside
the quotidian mail, its bold blank line
shuffled amid requests to be denied

or approved or simply tucked back in
until tomorrow. There was a big promise
you made when you decided to begin
this signal enterprise. It was not this.

Yet there you'll be, holding a stranger's pen,
hearing nothing but the carpet shift
with advisors and none to say Amen
to your autograph and the rift
it will thereafter create.

No, you
must say it. You must say it. You. You.

Chips

I won't believe I'm there.
Even though there will be ching-a-lings
in the pants pockets all around me,
galloping for refills around the room,
I won't believe I'm there.

It was a week
from tomorrow and then a week
from yesterday and then
I watched my hands
holding a queer-sided coin, wondering
if that antipodal chip could see my eyes
before I spent it on its own memory.

That was a week ago;
then, I was not here.

That

Perhaps today that phone will ring,
that check will be inside my box,
or I will find that Audemars Piguet wristwatch
my grandpa willed to me but I have never seen.

That moment I found that I must fend
for myself forever, I'd plunged
toe-deep in sand as soft as a young adult's complexion
that once all seemed like us, but now that seems like them.

Off season

Her night sweats are over.
The final exams were passed.
This is the early flight
to San Pedro, at last.

A thatch cabana and pool
built upon the sand
look just like the pictures.
They look as if they stand

in equal measure to
the everlasting tide.
Gusts and spates are daily
questions from the wide

mouth of the deep,
vanishing, lapping, Jah.
The groundsmen replace thatch
and dredge the rough Yaha

leaves from the pool.
Again, it looks like pictures.
At dawn, they'll comb the sand
for shattered light fixtures.

The mother will sip rum
and watch the search for shells.
She'll too know it's a picture
interposing swells.