

*'Sweet Elbow' is an idiom from Ancient Greece. It is akin to Aesop's fable of the sour grapes; it means something sweet, lovely, or pleasurable that is just out of reach. It is impossible to lick your own elbow, but people waste time and energy trying anyways -- this saying cautions us not to be swept up in the thought of what we cannot achieve.*

## **Cold Summer**

The sky is not salmon-colored.  
It is raw blood salmon,  
Layered in horizon with  
Cirrus-cloud bones.

It is raw blood salmon  
We are sent for in the mornings,  
Cirrus-cloud bones  
Float past the piers.

We are sent for in the mornings  
By algae-choked shores, our shoes  
Float past the piers  
Our hair falls free.

By algae-choked shores, our shoes  
Would hold us back  
Our hair falls free  
And we shiver.

The sky is not salmon-colored.  
It is raw blood heart,  
Our eyes are horizons  
And our ribcages, clouds.

## The Anchored Poem on Bellevue Avenue

A loop-winged chaos of birds  
unzip from their flock  
with the same satisfaction

as a toddler peels off  
velcroed shoes and cools  
his toes in mud-laced shoots of green.

Berry-stained lace  
at your neck flutters against  
your pulse at the same vibration

as a cobweb crystal-dripping  
hung from mist and feathers  
under the same vaulted sky

as a fog-drenched floodlight  
that sanctifies a pile of rubble  
and halos a blood-striped flag.

## Odyssey

The sunset's rose fingers grasp at a dying day,  
Claw over a black horizon  
And scrabble at still-hot asphalt,  
It gulps crushed-fruit evening air.  
"No!" It screams, "I am not ready!"

The stars above us tell tall tales,  
Our faces feral, tongued with flame.  
Red embers collect round our ankles, falling  
Like flakes of sunset.  
Someone sings "*You are my Sunshine*",  
And I find myself crying over broken clocks.

Later, in black winter mornings  
When I can see through a mile of forest  
When the owl becomes elusive  
I will clutch this wool coat to my face,  
Breathe deep of smoke and summer  
Knowing the sunsets will come again  
But not quite believing it.

## Wet Fur and Filigree

The fog rolls over us like wistfulness and we  
Are cotton-stuffed whistles.  
I lost my rubies down the drain, they clatter  
In the piping still.  
I hear them when the night comes quick,  
*Black-backed Thunder clap*

Some nights, you stretch over me  
Loose-knit, with holes  
For eyes and breath.  
Some nights we can't speak.

What happened to our crowns?  
They lost jewels like teeth,  
And the empty sockets follow me  
Past dusty bibles, cold walls  
Into Night.

Bring your questions to her.  
Yes, she will laugh.  
Some nights, that  
Is better than the truth.

## Sweet Elbow (Firing an Arrow)

Draw me like a re-curve,  
Like the sharp curve  
    of your elbow, sweet skin hidden  
In tense roil and tendon.  
Draw me back in black charcoal,  
Draw me breathless.

SNAP me to your cheek, sightline on *soft*  
Hold me like you hold your breath on  
Fog-dampened mornings  
Afraid your sigh  
Will be a catalyst afraid you'll  
    shoot me up high,  
Fly me to the sun  
Hazed red in smoke-choked sky

But hold me  
Like a breath,  
Guide me steady like a tattoo gun  
Your arm hairs are skin-prick-needles and the breath  
*hurts*  
Like fear.

Eyelashes shiver in fog and you know  
One wrong move and I'll SNAP  
One-hundred-twenty pounds of welts and wood splinters,  
So press me with a wide fingerprint  
    (leave it behind)  
Line me with a brown-butter iris

FIRE

I'll crease the fog, lightning-silent and you  
Won't  
*stop me*