

Born of a Dahlia

**The bitter dew of night dissolves into the ground like morning drips from pine
His grasp of a twig pings frozen sheets into shallow pools of mist at your feet**

Hello old friend

His obsidian feathers spiral upwards into the depth

You rise... or maybe Earth just pulls everything else away

**Ruby flowers bloom around his profile, dragging contrails of
silver through the viscous sky**

**The material world falls down what seems like a receding corridor, echoed with the bass
cracks of shutting doors**

**Memories: mothers, brothers, sisters, lovers,
locked away in keyless rooms**

Ended

**You stare at the beckoning glow and from the zenith of yearn his familiar pollen-encrusted
hand reaches for yours, and pulls you into a tender yellow**

**Through the crimson petals you see a black, warmed by summer sun through closed
eyelids**

**In a field of daffodils you sleep, a familiar arrangement
outside an unfamiliar farmhouse in an unfamiliar country
with an unfamiliar body sleeping next to you**

**You recognize him, but
now you call him Kitty**

Submarine

Walk into the primordial bubbles and the life that sprang within them.

The surface at your waist, hips move from side to side.
sand and silt,
soft and movable.

Pass through anemone groves and coral forests,
barnacles stuck to crimson crabs
and scale scratches in stone.

Waves are under your ribs now, filling the boneless valleys.

The sun paints bright gold on the dark surface,
God understands the fundamentally human need for depth.

Young horseshoe crabs jungle-gym through your toes,
too light,
too colorful to join the deep.

Waves fill under your arms,
palms given to a skin of warm water.

Flow forth,
hands continue to rise, with
halos of pale light enough for all.

Joined overhead,
one firefly in a sea of headlights.

The baptism of the world and its burial.

Elysian Fields

“Everything was beautiful, and nothing hurt”

- Kurt Vonnegut

Fire no longer warmed him.
Amber housing insects, animals, and men alike,
turned a hollow white.

Cracks ran through his feet like great rivers,
ripples buckled his nails
and glazed his skin.

His gaze dripped to the resolution of his ruby-tinted staff—
something his daughter,
at the age of five,
had thought worthy to summon from its muddy grave.

No more chasing monkeys,
only the dust left behind.

The flames that have witnessed all generations of men,
that used to cascade down the back of his tongue and fill him up from the soles of his feet,
no longer saw their reflection in his eyes.

He rose from his slice of elm,
from the stone ring that lined the fire,
and walked off with his back cold to kindle.

The more forsaken it was, the more alluring it became—
to give in to a false promise,
to remain
a comfortable vacancy.

He relished one backward glance.

The salt of his tears burrowed into the corners of his mouth.

Footfalls, once hollow bowls,
grew thorn-like depressions for claws and wide surfaces for leathery pads.
The farther he looked back,
the less he recognized what had made them.

The snow rose like a tide,
beginning under his toes and climbing to his knees,

blood freezes,
turns blue.

A hand placed on a trunk realizes they've never been apart.

Air gasps over his teeth and down his throat,
gripping his insides.
His flesh and bone become porous,
a paper lantern filled with glass.

He had gone back—
no longer a body, no longer a person—
returned to the Earth.

This is God's country.
This is Heaven.
This is Hell.
This is

the
Hall of Kings.

I sometimes hear claps in the dark.

They used to frighten me—
bed sheets were castles,
clothes armor, and
eyelids impenetrable shields—

but I could ward them off, holed up in my fortress of shadows.

I used to hear claps in the dark,

somehow
they found their way into the day.
Crow-haunted phantom palms
spoke from the
dim corner of an
open room.

The ambient acclaims never called for me,
they never answered any scrutinizing stares or
cardboard ouija attempts.
They came from a place
too severed
for earthly trivialities.

Claps from the abyss
straying far enough to be heard
next to the bed of a child.

I used to hear claps in the dark,

signaling no start or end.
A blind phantom searching for a sacred deer.
Chalk skin and
cotton robes with
faded beige flowers.

Footsteps graduate to wind and
soles soften after years of bottomless halls.
Sight is something gifted to those who
still walk on

paved roads.

Blind catfish in a bottomless pool,
maybe that's why apparitions are white.

Soundless,

risen from the black pearl of immortality.

Fingers in a
perfect curl
after
antiquity.

I sit at the ivory keys,
tingles parallel my spine,
an invisible audience
listens when
no one watches.

I sometimes hear claps in the dark.