

Re-substantiation

I was happy to feel that blood.
I knew it was here, swollen and warm,
the way I knew it was there, drying,
when they called to say he was missing

with a gun

Could you please try calling him?

Yesterday's ache of growing Texas martyrs
became one of those pains that pulsed
and gripped the steering wheel when
I braked long enough to feel

Thank God
I'm not pregnant
in Kentucky

I can't get a hold of him.

The one degree of separation that kept their hands clean
I want to press between their palms
like a prayer stone
with the sharp end facing the bone and staring through
skin with a scream

They're looking.

I hope something makes them stigmatic-stream
and that it does not stop flowing and leaking and draining
until the pools drown their gesture in the lives
of those they took

I hope their fingerprints last
and that their legacy
sinks them deep

So that when my thumb is gripped by a little hand,

instead of this welcomed red,
her body is proof of a reckoning

until we send her to school

I'm sorry.

Cocoon

The first who arrived on line twelve, her in the fur and him in the black,
 both with socks which suited shoes that belonged on streets,
 arms crossed one plastic seat
 and in his handkerchief pocket as he stood, no words,
 not even to nod the stop, eyes ahead and past the glass.

At dinner, there were just two wings – orange oozing into a blur – circling around the three below. I figured that the butterfly had arrived with the front yard's fresh daffodil patch. And that it had snagged adventure in the whirl of the ac unit. I watched on the other side.

And then him, with crutches, and her,
 with chestnut hair that held her hips,
 who smiled and pulled in close,
 like the three-quarters mark of a movie,
 and she left, flicking the door open, not watching to see
 if he fluorescent followed behind.

After my walk, the two became six. I poured a glass to drink. Now, eight? Ten? Like water in hot oil, the frenzy pumped their bodies into and against and with the synthetic cyclone. They were at the whim of seventy-one degrees.

Now them, who let masks hang and chair fling upright
 to press into each other, him petting the bridge of her nose,
 her checking their reflection in the smudged poster beside my head,
 as a shove hurdled them into what was next.

The sun set, the house cooled, and the thermostat stopped. And the breeze-climbing couples made a dash into the fiery shadows of dusk trees. I watched them quiver in the pine limbs until night turned the window into a mirrored face.

And the metal released from our embrace,
 and I danced down the hill because my body said so,
 elbow pushing through the winter evening air, inviting
 fingers to a sweet flourish at the peak,
 falling again as my feet told me to turn.

She takes her bow. And becomes my home.

Pennebaker said that if you write, you go to the doctor less // Water is healing

I bet those sideways scribbles were like morning's first faucet sip.
We didn't think to need it,
but it sure did feel good I think,
when the pen straddled nubby fingertips and puffy palms
like a colander balanced between big pot and frying pan.

It's important to stay hydrated.

She placed me at the afterdinner table with marker and laminated alphabet
like a mutt pup thrown into the lake because he surely knows how to swim.
His flails and gasps breed confidence after his bones teach him how.
As I traced and invented, sometimes my Ls would twist into 2s and
Ns into Ms.

Mom was glad the ink wiped away dry.

But still, she warned the kindergarten that I'd taught myself and that I
was proud. From his tank beside the bookshelf,
the box turtle slammed up against the glass. The splash held my gaze
when I was supposed to erase on dotted lines and train fingers for form.

The cartons of the journals downstairs in the hot water closet.

Pound for pound, how many of them would represent surgeries unstarted, scars unslit, organs
unautomized, molecules unmitigated?
If he had just written rather than sinew-strain, how far could he have been saved?
If he had told us earlier, if he could, would my plane ticket home still be a text box alongside his
earthen one?

At what point across the ocean does my keyboard activate?

Sixty-two pages of stumbling misanthropy,
what happened, then, when a few fell out
drunk in a room of a million languages?
What good did it do?

Your body is 70% water.

At the British Museum

1:22pm

I remember telling Sarah on the high school steps that I couldn't wait to travel to Egypt with you
Finally, we could go
to a place you always wanted

~~The Ramses statue caught snot in my mask~~

When you were little, why did you like the mummies?

1:45pm

I started to get angry that there's more left of them than there is of you
*They were preserved by magic and then hidden and venerated and abused
Concealed and cradled in cloth then wood then stone and centuries and now glass
heat controlled and spotlit and billboarded*

1:52pm

Cancer, brittle bones, tuberculosis sourced suffering were now on display. For memory. For
"woman (35-49 years)" and "young...dynasty" and "man, Sudan."
*Still anonymous bones who held bread and babies
And you, we left you less than this, in a bedroom with the door closed. It could be soil from the
spot where you fell or paper plant dust.*

6:06pm

*So did we go together? Was I closer to the mother in the glass box than I was to you?
Maybe it was the way that I was curious about the words on the plaques that pulled me to you,
you pulling me to you. But all I could think was: I survived.*

Romantic

We called that pretty, and it stopped them,
but shaken centimes in cardboard cups couldn't.
Pink puffs of cotton candy cloud
painted in backward portraits while
the real thing brewed over cigarette butt huts,

and I walked down it while the artist
stopped to ask *quelle heure est-il*,
but the concrete drying kept me from
translating, so I showed her the phone
which, in English, showed me as I was,

and my lover's hand who held his own
sunset zinnia which I gripped in palms
that were freshly picked by pupil induced
présentation and pest indulged paranoia.

You displace what's
in front of you

to see less clearly.