

Roadside Picnic

A broken piano leg jabs from rubble, twisted strings,
ivory displaced from elephants, now displaced from keyboard

but no one wants to absorb themselves in something so
far from home. Synthetic drugs, synthesizers, laminates

and plastic cups with which to drink, drop by drop, dyes
and sweeteners. Harnessed atoms and automatons, gone

into space and back again. For all this we have survived
a few thousand years and intend to keep on a few thousand

more. Patience is luxury and luxury is time and time is something
else entirely; a bubble lifting off the bottom of a boiling pan.

St. Louis Metro

A man spills into the aisle and seat
beside his seat.
When he turns, we lock eyes.

His face is covered in beads of sweat.
His body nothing
compared to the whites of his pupils.

Two stops from downtown,
he disembarks:

a hooded sweatshirt and leather jacket
in eighty-five degree humidity.

We are animals. This man
and this man. I am, and he is
made of shoulders, and burdens.

All of us this way, except for the chosen
few. Chosen by who? Yes, chosen
to be like hollow boned birds.

To fly and roost above it all.
Who am I to want to hold a gun?

To hunt again like I did when I was a kid.
But I never shot anything
except for my neighbor in the stomach.

The bb left a divisive welt.
And afterwards the belt.

Cathedral of Light

There is an endless list of things I would trade
to bury my lips against your neck. An endless fury
to the heart's phantoms. Somewhere there
is a cathedral of light where I kneel at the altar
of your touch. Your fingers are cold and damp.
When I put them in my mouth they taste chalky
and bitter. On the very edge where crows gather
the earth opens. I'm looking for an entrance
when I should be looking for an egress. Down
each circle until there is nothing left of me but
blistering heat, not a wound, not anymore,
just a hunger hard enough to eat through steel.

Fable of Salt

Lover of the long-shot, under-dog, inexplicable.
Curious way this round globe is held in space
like a dream, and how un-dreamlike most days are.
Evaporated, crystalline, stinging as this body loses
and accumulates, accumulates and loses. A pilgrim.
An ocean of life. An unattainable star. To extract
each lost grain and build a fallible mound is to be
buried in history. Accumulation of sweat. Accumulation
of tears. This single, impure conception of self.

Heaven

Sun stretches shadows, elongates the world.
Will soon be steeped in chicken scratch.
Emerges as a sigh. I think I knock

on the door to heaven, but it is a wall of siding.
Opposable thumbs, five senses, mind like a doormat.

Each day a stab with a long stick at things
which are impossible to skewer. Gravity, the power
to ground us. Light, we think, allows us to see.