

Self Portrait as Lover and Lost

unwrap a piece
of chocolate

press the paper flat
and smooth

place it gently
atop the tower

of delicate silver
what-is-left

they make a sound
like dry autumn leaves

rustling with a crack
underneath

when I shift in bed
settle into crescent

I wish I could press
my heart

flat and smooth
like paper freed

from chocolate
kiss new creases

and fold into wings
a thousand

purple cranes
freed from blood

and ache

we made our own apocalypse

when the clouds part and the moon
light loops cold around your throat,
do you ever feel that we are doomed?

are you ever overcome with a sorrow
ancient and aching? what must that moon
have seen, no mouth to scream, as below

everything withers. endlessly, we consume
and discard, we spread webs where light flows
like a river before dams and poison. our doom

is lounging in our sight. no
mortal eye could hold that moon
and deny its rage — O

starlit fury, curse of dust, womb
of cosmic devastation, stoke the glow
of holy fire and spell the doom

of smog cloaked skylines, melting snow,
black ocean water dotted with pale crescent moons:
soft bellies of fish bloated with shit. we are the doom
of our great Mother, and we'll reap what we sow.

Elegy For My Mother's Happiness

If things had happened
the way they were supposed to,

I would not have written this poem
the first time, or any other time.

If things had happened
the way they were supposed to,

my mother would smile, say
she was glad to know the truth of me

& mean it.
She would reach

across the table to take my hand
& say *I'm so happy*

to have you back
& mean *here, with me*

instead of *the way you were*
before.

We walk around each other,
grave dust brushed across wrists

& collarbones like an expensive
perfume. Politely, we avert

our eyes from the wounds.
We talk around each other.

Can you write an elegy
for something you killed?

Can you write life into
a smiling mother's ghost?

I drag my fingers through the dust
& start again.

Mark Rothko, No. 21

something in the light
the way the color blurs
and gently fades
peach, gold, butter yellow
sliding in and out
a condensation

of smokey white on bronze, condensation
spreading and breathing out light
soft simplicity breathing out
something blurring
something yellow
something fading

is it fading?
or filling up? condensation
of milky sunshine, drops of yellow
spinning the light
softness in the blur
something warm breathing out

in a sigh, letting out
the sides of a shape fading
into a sound blurring
into condensation
into light
yellow

like a perfectly fried egg, yellow
like lemonade left out
in sunlight
like a summer day fading
into warm afternoon, like condensation
on marigolds, summer mornings blurring

together in a low hanging mist, a blur
of warm breath and yellow
flowers, drag your hands through condensation
breathe out
something gold before it fades
might glitter if it catches the light.

blur of lemon and honey: breathe out
something warm and yellow: fade
of day into stars and stillness: condensation of light.