

## industrial girl

*metal / welded bones / mouths bolted / broad, open / industrial girl, silverbellied*

ticking. timer. your analog christening. touch. gray. metallic tongues. your body is open,  
unbloodied / hardware cannot bleed.

hand on the body, neck, mouth, tongue. hypothesis in motion. motive. *are you  
his motive?*

house alive, eating whole sections  
of your metal

bones, skeleton; *once baked: WD-40 over salt.*

your plastic hair

tied around his wrist, not yours not his hers you swallow.  
red button behind the ear.

machines are not programmed to cry.

a Wife, a Mother, a Handmaiden, a House Service.

coded into softheaded bodies carved of stone, metal, alloy ingot hardware.  
iron sewn into a burgundy dress.

red dresses only, to swallow the taste of blood.

*who are you?* maiden who cannot bleed.

industrial girl, silverbellied

*girls no longer*

*bleed.*

## **animatronic ballet**

*(n.) technology that uses electronic systems to operate or animate puppets and other figures  
[used for motion pictures]*

*(n.) a classical dance form demanding grace and precision; means of creating expression  
through movement.*

animated bodies boil in the  
lacuna between psychosis,  
adjective severance, the soul  
of a bent weld between the  
brash bolts. soldered flesh.  
burnished veins. silver crucible  
embalmed in blood, in wet, tied  
between the bloated folds of  
the (un)holy body.

eyehooks bladed in the space  
of a back, thin line traced  
down, over, below, curtailed.  
swallow and the well moves  
through the stomach, bile acid  
oil, metal pressure, arcane blood  
thick in esoterica. speculative  
manufacturing above, beneath,  
below the earth.

*does blood  
taste the same  
metal teeth,  
iron tongue?*

## Eagle Island

The trailhead ends in dry growth; yellow grass,  
deadened duckweed, gold stretched lines that  
look like wheat. His brown sandals crimp  
sun-stained leaves against the earth, stepping over  
to reach the edge of the bay; we follow; first my brothers,  
older than younger; I attach myself to their heels.

The earth unfolds in front of me; origami shapes  
that touch, cracked dry liquid wet. I remember the  
soft shallow floor beneath the water, yellow red brown rocks,  
shining gold under silver ripples. The water is green up close,  
mossy rocks distorted beneath it. Brown boulders hold them,  
cupped hands that cradle the soft overgrown pebbles.

My brothers are down at the water's edge, the tip of it,  
their feet muddied beneath the ripples; soft wind brushing  
the surface, pressing in toward their small hands. Jason's body  
juts outward over the water, Brian's head bulbous beneath  
his arm. Their skin looks blue and distorted.

My dad leans behind me, gently jutting his knees against my back,  
nudging me forward. I press back against him, unwilling; he pushes  
harder; I tumble forward, body splashing into the shallow water.  
I edge out toward my brothers; lifting my body up to balance on my toes,  
keeping as little of me pressed against the unknowable lake floor as I can.  
The swirling brown green blue grey reddish colors move around my ankles,  
the nerves along the bottoms of my feet as my only guide. The mushy  
edge of an overgrown rock, spiked weeds caught in the knuckles of my  
toes, something moves across the lower part of my calf—fish, snail,  
weed, eel? *Do California lakes have eels?*

We dare our dad to swim to the island in the middle of the inlet.  
“Swim there and back,” we taunted him, barely serious. His body  
diving into the water is long and hard, caving beneath the cobalt  
surface; his feet kick back above it, jetting him forward. His form  
undulates under the furrowing tide, and we watch as he jerks forward  
into the unknown tucked beneath the lake's drop off point,  
only a few feet beyond the spaces between my brothers' toes and mine.

I touch back upon this moment sometimes when I think about my dad.  
There's a vastness grown between us, full and bracing and coarse and cold.  
We don't match the man, the girl in that place anymore, staring across at that  
swollen island. The sun doesn't sleep underground; Earth doesn't unfold  
in front of me anymore, but exists in gaps. Blank spaces, empty labyrinths.

He, unfamiliar to me; I, unfamiliar to him. We cannot swallow each other.  
We are two cavities, earth islands apart. A Pangea that's been reversed.

## could i have

you were an ocean;  
black waves that crashed,  
purpled veins between white frothing lips.  
your stomach pressed against the  
black mountain skyline,  
kissed your belly button,  
your sunken hips, rolling  
sunken ships. you quenched the earth  
of its sallow thirst. you were  
airy, steadfast, and free.  
*Could I have held you from the fall?*

there is memory trapped beneath  
this seersucker skin around my bones,  
like the image of a newspaper  
printed upon a sidewalk in the rain.  
my body remembers you better  
than the unanchored stills of my  
mind ever will. i touch you, still.

ten toes on the ocean floor  
there was an upward  
motion, a propelling,  
propulsion of a body into  
a meteor. the acid washing  
of a skin gone cold.  
formaldehyde that has  
embalmed a carelessness long  
lasting on the brim of your  
upturned lips. you died of  
something dreadful, the print  
of a demon upon your soft  
body still. i see it, a sifted  
whisper. a long gone  
memory, a reminiscence now gone.  
*Could I have held you from the fall?*

it wasn't the first time you tried to fly.  
i wondered, then, if it would be the last.  
your toes curled round the bloated edge  
of that concrete bridge. you teased the  
edge like seafoam upon narrow strips of sand.  
a moth's swelled body against the slender edges  
of a flame. i thought that i could catch you;

a practice in futility. there was no catching.  
no fall unplanned. you kept a net  
beneath you, until finally you didn't.  
my arms were not chain link cloth.  
i was no ocean. you couldn't dive  
into my distended body  
and be caught inside yourself, still.

i watched you sink; into  
and upon yourself, slowly.  
you used to write, "My depression..."  
as if it was a child being  
rocked slowly to sleep, eyes closed,  
honey-pink and dribbling,  
warm hands, curled feet.  
cradling yourself between two words,  
you were asleep inside this illness.  
*Could I have held you from the fall?*

there are no bounds to being  
thirteen. sixteen. seventeen.  
it's endless, ceaseless, amaranthine.  
there was more to you than any of us, then,  
tucked away inside the small denseness  
of your body. something there  
we couldn't grasp; wouldn't grasp; not until  
you tore from reach. there are no bounds  
to being thirteen. sixteen. seventeen.

i watched your body drop;  
the river, an open mouth, curled out and open,  
waiting to catch your shrunken, swollen flesh.  
when your bones hit the water, a snap echoed.  
a piece of my own body bent inward; i think it stayed.  
sometimes i think a piece of your body  
came alive, again, inside my own. i wonder, still.  
*Could I have held you from the fall?*

## **girl in glory, rising**

a brown bridge stares across a wide koi pond  
brimming blushing copper pennies,  
pulling the sun down between the  
green-gold ripples on the water's surface.  
honey-pink bellies float, soft and feathered, just beneath.  
a wildflower skyline braces the warm brown mountains,  
tipping golden hands toward the sun-stained tops.  
something soft moves in the rosy wind as  
brown-haired girls float in the air, running with  
fast-beating hearts in a copper-yellow field.

one of them cuts across the grass,  
her wide feet swimming above the hard-packed dirt as she flies.  
her bright blushing cheeks shine in the golden light,  
melting the sunny freckles on her nose as she  
bows through the soft rose wind.

she is  
girl in glory, rising  
pressing gold between the shallow waves.  
she points her body toward the sun,  
and lets the light peel the shrunken words from her soft honey chest;  
golden leaves sprout from her open hands,  
crowning beneath her fingernails as she  
tips her honey hands toward the shining mountain tops.

**January 4, 2015**

I remember ever clearly that bulbous belly over  
those black-grey swim shorts, hipline visible above the  
waistband. Were the shorts black-grey?  
Were they black, or even grey?  
I don't remember.  
Do you?

*I did not know you I did  
not know you I did not  
know you I did not know.*

There is a blankness to my body, a sheet of  
rock unbroken, shards of glass unmelted.

*I do not know you I do  
not know you I do not  
know you I do not know.*

My hair is red my eyes are blurry, not yet cleared  
of that childish sheen. I thought I knew things,  
thought that the universe fit my body better  
than it ever could. I was a child, barely 16 to you  
an ageless body, youth contained, an entity untouched.  
You know what you've done, what your hands  
had built inside of me. There are castles,  
a city of glass and carbon fibre cased  
in stone. I can still feel calluses on your  
hands, imprints of a city you've built, toxins  
penetrating the body of my youth, nevermore.  
I felt it fall, swallowed in dirt and sand, swelled  
beneath the coarse roots of deadened grass.  
How many cities have you built? How many  
bodies have you tried to make your own?

*I do not know you I do  
not know you I do not  
know you I do not know.*

We are sitting, space between us until you move,  
your leg forming a touchtone line against mine.  
I don't know this place. It is a place I do not know,  
a place that does not know me. Its language  
escapes my tongue, a rolling that growls beneath the lip.  
An open, empty marsh a gutted nowhere



lost entirely on me. A patch of dirt below me, tall grass  
growing, razor pieces that gloat their gentle motion  
deadened in that golden heat.

My body feels peeled open, the skin of an unripe  
orange, cut and pulled, a skeletal tear from  
crown to plantar, swelled sternum turned west.

Your hand is on my leg.  
Your hand is on my knee.  
Your hand is on my hip.

*I do not know you I do  
not know you I do not  
know you I do not know.*

The sun is pocketed between the thinly spaced,  
feathered pink bodies cocked along the azure water line.  
Blushed flamingo bodies. They don't know, don't see  
the hand on my leg, mouth beneath my neck, cheek,  
boned hip against my own. Chapped lips,  
beige or brown, not pink at all, hunting for  
my own to catch, to nip, devour.  
Flamingos aren't my favorite bird anymore.

*I do not know you I do  
not know you I do not  
know you I do not know.*

The air in the car tastes stale; my music plays,  
bands I won't listen to again, not for months  
beyond this moment. The car is black; a small sedan  
that eats the sunlight upon the highway, a mongrel, a  
monster, I let it devour me.

*I do not know you I do  
not know you I do not  
know you I do not know.*

I have become vacant, a soul divided, quartered  
into pieces the way a cut of meat might be.  
The swollen bumps in the road pull the car  
down into the dirt, only to spit us back out,  
again, again, again  
againagainagain;

*I do not know you I do  
not know you I do not  
know you I do not know.*

I no longer know myself. I am a woman unborn,  
a child's body mangled. I am both alive and not,  
uncertain of my own reality. The music in the car has shrunk,  
another sense taken from me, one more sensitivity  
in my body swollen in heat, evaporated, dissipated.

Your hair was long. I don't know what  
it looks like now. Don't know your  
hands, that gnarled shape of your face.  
Are your eyes still that strange color,  
untouched by time, or by that white-tinged  
Mexican sun? I am unwhole, not fully formed.  
A piece of myself was stolen by you.  
I cannot complete myself.  
Will you ever know?

*I do not know you I do  
not know you I do not  
know you I do not know.*

The new year comes gently, each January  
pulling my body tighter, bones stiffer. I am but  
a fraction of myself, made up of the pieces  
gone missing.

*January 4, 2015.*