

**aurora***—moons & Junes & ferris wheels*

some mornings i believe  
                   in as many as eleven impossible things  
 before i sidle up to the breakfast table's vast  
                   welcoming arms, find miracles blooming inside  
 hands playing an unlearned sonata, truly a marvel  
                   in the malaise.

questions as indentions, observe slowly,  
                   fizzle with purpose. what happened to the street?  
 it's slipped discreetly out of sight — bathes in bloodshot amber &  
                   gold. tonight thick Brooklyn fog sails softly over shoulders,  
 the Verrazano waving its one free fist in the distance, belt cinched  
                   around its waist, tinsel heaving on its chest.

we sleep sweet on searing sheets, artificial wind tapping  
                   gently at our cheeks. i tuck love neatly behind your ear  
 & steal sight of you swallowing teeth, laughing with eyelids slackened,  
                   bedimming daydreams, looping serene, unsheathe caverns  
 of green splendor across your spangled beam. i hang my smile on the mantelpiece,  
                   our wings grow back just before atrophy adorns the leaves —

wider than windows wrapped around this doomed marble,  
                   elastic as exhaust fumes lazing  
 in the summer sky. as they blink & sigh, breathless half-takes billow up through  
                   the grates. the streetlights whisper amen,  
 you & i sing amends, bellowing burly & bright in the belly of the beast,  
                   more prudent & proud than Catholic pews.

**& for that i am responsible**

the Gravesend Bay shoreline, blushing with reticence, framed between the brick shoulders of giants, followed us wherever we went, a friendly flock of birds freckling its face, occasionally & by occasionally i mean frequently cloaked in rain, a mirage of thirst, seeking shelter in cubby holes, one for every speech i made during my first year sober, muted colors marking each one, this one burnt sienna for the serenity prayer, this one star-shorn bronze for counting days, this one quicksilver gray for amendments made or not, so on & so forth, the itchy phase of healing, wondering what did it mean when you kissed the brick wall, left furious red prints the shape of an unknown continent, then knowing, in the coves within my chest cavity: the beast, my disease, dancing like an animal enmeshed in its own net, death in patterns brighter & more saturated than the shine of the blade, a tumor still pulsing, then, your gaze, sweat-slick & rough as a cat's tongue, knocking the calm clean off my face.

**it's summer in the projects & no one can hear you scream**

put it on a billboard why don't you & the  
screen door kisses the archway so  
ferociously you can hear sandalwood  
splitting mite by mite you can see  
sparks searing the air until it  
flares & rusts you can see the sky  
finding an escape as if to whisper "this  
is your problem now" & it is  
your problem but it isn't a problem  
you were born with it's a problem  
passed down like crying brass bullets  
an heirloom that swells & spills like  
a secret spoken for the first time the storm before  
the storm is so quiet it's almost yesterday  
it's almost forgotten it's never forgotten  
we speak too soon glass slippers at the  
bruising hour of 11pm when cricket calls  
are the soaring sound you pray keeps you  
awake not the snakebite tantrums that burst  
like heartbeats in babylon like ashtray fingers  
in your eye like the faithful diligence of  
drowning i'm not a criminal but i feel like one  
she says as the screen door comes swinging  
back kissing that archway again bouncing off  
& stumbling away with airborne precision  
a pianist taking a bow under the soft vulgar shiver  
of summer's starving light

**the panic room at Xanadu***for Robert James White*

when birdsongs fill the dusk  
 & not the light, the ground leaves your feet.  
 you check your watch but find  
                                 it's licorice tied so tight  
 i imagine God was taking your blood pressure.

you hover over me  
 like a spacecraft & every bubble of noise  
 in traffic sounds like a soft landing.

where did you go when you found out  
                                 that bones are made of glass?  
 did you remember that your heart  
                                 is an overdue library book?

we're suspended from class & in time —  
 in between there's a world fair  
 with your widow's peak as the mascot. there's a trap door  
 on the roof of your mouth  
 & inside i can't decide whether it's too warm  
                                 or too cold  
 or just right  
                                 but if it were just right  
 i'd just stay in  
                                 & if i just stayed in

i wouldn't have found the wreaths glowing,  
 collapsing stars, wrapped around my twin's neck.

a phantom limb too short to box with God —  
 just long enough to reach my necklace & swallow it  
 until daylight spills out of your navel. billowing cloud dust,  
 skywriting your name in  
                                 futura free fuscia  
 but spelled with an asterisk & a hangnail.

i confused them when you took a bite out of my Adam's apple  
& stopped me mid-sentence.

i was only trying to order dessert but  
the waiter brought us two plates of sand.

with tenuous fingers we build  
a castle.  
charged with a bright bowl  
of rain,

our new home dissolves like sugar  
in an ocean of oversteeped tea  
but we sit in the muck & admire all of the teeth  
gleaming in the sky.

i am shook with grief & clarity,  
but  
how tranquil you are  
as the waves  
rise  
to meet us halfway.

**the long way home**

the shoulder blade  
of the BQE. longer than the

ligaments in your wrist. last night  
in your veins.

the petrichor of September,  
29 days since

the last school shooting.  
an unmoving song

on a cab radio, which may  
or may not

have sang your name  
with expletives.

a hungry animal  
peering into a snow-lit

alleyway, which did not  
exist.

the first polite refusal  
of a tumbler glass three

fingers deep of  
whiskey. the second

not-so-polite refusal  
of a ride home with

an alluring stranger.  
no, the allure

of a stranger. footprints the shape  
of a plum.

today,  
the oldest i've ever been.

your doorstep, kissed  
with an eviction notice,

notarized by Kings County,  
sealed with surrender. lost

kingdoms. a fountain filled  
with asphalt. the last seat

on the D train  
everyone is too distraught

to sit in. a sad game of musical  
chairs.

warriors sick & withered,  
a cold evening in a field of

violins. stars flickering,  
the glimmer of shark's teeth

in the open mouth of an  
autumn night.

the damp indent  
in moss,

God throwing  
the light of the sun under

your hair. eyes  
like a parking lot,

filling instead of speaking —  
the long way home.