

DRIFTWOOD

Wind Grazing Wave Crests

Dawn soon carved
by the shadows left by loss
in each layer of real
and what we bring into each room,
windows painted shut,
voices stymied by glass.

On the street,
the world starts in fifteen minutes,
strap on your watch
or
write into this quiet
as your lover rolls out of sleep,
her thighs catching light.

Dream waxed eyes deep,
she watches you
as a doe,
standing in long grasses and sun,
watches an August streambed
and sees wind

grazing wave crests,
clouds rooted in undertow.

The Liquid Songs of Robins

Day-dream small windows, sun slats crossing
a wood floor to her statue, his eyes steadied
that instant by marble in her artist's reach,

a remedy for the soul vertigoes delivered
daily cubicle to cubicle. He steps out
onto their second floor porch and stretches

his arms below the red gauze of an April sunset,
ears following a train wailing towards
her factory, her crew soon taking

their first break, knotted shoulders ready for
the liquid songs of robins. Her legs, rippled hints
of a jazz dancer's spine, jut out of a denim skirt

and on into mud-crusting boots in the mantle photo,
both dogs claiming one stick, small town background.
No jobs there. This sky dropping red and saffron robes,

dusk stumbles across lanes with one eye open
as happy hour mimes the day-shift's truncated
ballets. Soon, city night will glimmer with strings

of sodium pearls, marquee and back porch lights.
They all will pile into the car and go idle outside
a factory gate, late buses being too dangerous.

Having shortened an Oregon winter with their passion,
sleeping back-to-back then turning, she'll be sharing
baby photos with her co-workers in 6 months.

Brush Tip, Canvas

Starlight slips inside grasses
soft as deep fur, moon

a half-shell dropping
from nighthawk talon.

She turns and faces the night tide,
ocean thrown winds gnaw up porch

steps and inside wool. Focus kept
bow-string taut on the guidance

of friction, the stepladder wrists
of tomorrow beveled

as the bones of her eye-to-hand
dip branches of marrow into a stream.

Dawn said to martyr dream,
she brushes white aside

below an arch of deep waves.
Her eyes delta votive wax

onto altar cloth, this loud
chorus of stars soon fading.

Silk Finale

Stepping back from the edge of a street-light pool,
his lines of preludes
are gang glyphs on a wall
near his station as he whistles at night traffic.

With street-wise finesse, he un-sleeves a flick of his right hand,
lighter palm catching light, signaling a brother spotter
hid behind half-open drapes or twilight.

Then he long-eyes my stance,
my parked, empty, idling, bus w/2-way radio,
the quick cig flares
within my smoke cloud while I stay,
stay between sidewalk
and curb.

Satisfied that his warning is heeded,
he watches for cops and customers.

He whistles his teenage octave at slow-rolling cars,
a toned magnet inviting headlights to bend
towards a white-lined,
silk finale.

His eulogy hangs as a dialect
pleated into the arms
of his dark coat.

Incurable Eyes

She sees vaccines and illusions
riding downtown curbs,
city night balanced

along the edge of a duotone slant,
moon pulling shadows across current,
spotlights revolving below a dome

capped with silvered contrails. Loss
tattooed on the wing of a dream
let to fly. She walks beside a river wall
to the peace garden, haiku in stone
rooted in nuclear war.

A tug boat plies upriver, lone deckhand
near the bow, incurable eyes sweeping
a rectangle of sky as trucks throttle
down bridge slopes.

Bridge legs collecting shadows
as she traces carved letters a mile
beyond the work-week's spinal taps.

Tough to be solo amid these weekend couples.
Flaring colors across fresh canvas after
a wreck in the same town is hard work,
the promises given in that dream
echo inside memory.

She pivots away from laughter,
dank cloth of hot summer on her arms
and legs, gaze snagged
on an initialed bench.