

Start

Lining up near a throng
of other little girls

striped knee socks rising
from velcro sneakers of pink

and purple clashing with camp
shirts orange and white

we waited on dead grass
no longer green until

a whistle broke through
the air, startling our crowd

into motion, and in the middle
of the pack, with whipping

ponytails blinding sight
with elbows and knees

building barriers
locking us like puzzle pieces

keeping the herd together
I found my way out

and flew toward a splintered
makeshift totem pole finish

line upon discovering
that I could run.

Into the West

highway transformations
 criss-cross the country
turnpike entrances
 dot the states
 places recounted
by parkway exits
 co-gen plants
 give way
 to corn fields
to the continental
 divide

there exists a point
 after industry
before complacency
 where scenic overlooks
 become contemplations
 of prairie grasses
the journey
begins at a toll booth

entrance ramps
 gas stations
 rest stops
mile markers
of the passage of time

 interstitial spaces
with roadside sculpture
 and memorial crosses
 replace mini-malls
 and truck depots
where antelope
 really do play
against barbed wire backdrops
 and the unnatural
 beauty
of a smog-inspired
 neon pink sun
melting
 into the horizon

but before I-80
 dead ends
 into the ocean
before you reach the salt flats
 that were once
 vast seas
before tumbleweed
 adheres to the front
 bumper

we
have already passed
into the west

Desire

I want your lips,
 lips that are mine
neither by birth
 nor commitment,
I want them to kiss places
 with no proper names
 in the annals of anatomy.
We will name them
 together.
 We will baptize those places
 with our breath
 the order of consonants and vowels
 secret
 and idiosyncratic
and shared
 in silence.

I want your eyes.
 I want to claim them
 in a way that I cannot.
I want them on me
 following me
 feeling their gaze move and rest
 in time with my hips
and I want to see what I look like
 inside them.

The Naming of Things

We dance around the vocabulary
but there isn't a word
to suit

and all the ones tested
sit ill on tongue
and teeth

neither of us certain
that a words exists
to define our relationship
one to the other

neither of us certain
we need definition

Adam went about the garden
telling every bird and beast
what it ought to be called

ignoring the fact
that they were what they were
whether He liked it
or not

ignoring the fact
that the snake
would charm
and then bite

no matter what name
He gave him

Eastbound

The wind chill
 made the air
 feel 14 degrees
 below
when I left this morning
 before the sun
showed its face
to a sky of perfect
 sapphire
 blue

and the sky is punctuated with stars
 too bright and too many to name
 and I want you
to tell me which ones they are

but I leave while you still sleep
gently kissing your forehead goodbye
 and though you stir
your snoring continues

I drive east
 and watch the sun
work its magic
on the Pennsylvania landscape
 the colors of it breaking
my heart
 over and over
I see the spectrum
 everywhere
in fields of snow
on the rock walls
 lining the highway
in the memory of your hair
 as it catches the moonlight
before you wake