

I was once

a silk tent
you washed me
in sugar and oil

I was once proof
you gave me advice:
find an enemy

I was once
a flooded town
the lake's new floor

I was once
a magazine of bullets
you handled me gently

I was once
a chancellery of clouds
night taffeta

I was once
a suffering body
you became my self-portrait

Coney Island

last stop step out

into a changed world, haunted

not by the dead but the still-

living past, tenacity

of billboards, signs

it's where I felt crazy lost

everything talked back

I took photographs there

benches gulls old men

hotdog wrappers fishing poles

tableaux of actors and props

to lend reality

invisible to myself

I thought I could see invisible things

after dusk, I'd take the long ride

back to Astoria, shaking off the nostalgia

that I can't shake off

tighten my coat

memorize my reflection,

say I am a fixed object

I am real I am fixed

under the trestles

soot and dust

wafted onto my hair and skin

I walked the few blocks from the train

to my apartment

I lived there

for eight years

but never came home

Day of Diminishing Returns

Most pictures of today
have blue in them, a dusty blue
moss and winter ivy, fern blankets
the lens was pointing downwards
to below eye level, to the crushed
cans and ramen cups and cheap
bubbly bottles caught in the arborvitae
archaeological droppings from recent
ruins, the homeless who push grocery
carts up and down the street, clanking
like Marley in all but the worst weather

one night last fall, I was ambling home
from Gladstone in a fine mist, giddy drunk
and lobbed a hello to the carved woman
and cart-pushing man, her face broke
into a radiant smile and she swung her arm
at the moon

hello she cawed I hope you have a beautiful evening!

You too! I responded and because I could not think
of anything else to do, I gave them two thumbs up
kept my thumbs up and wiggled them
and they put their thumbs up too,

and we stood like that

afterwards, I realized a radio

must be in the cart, the wavering, crackling music

filling the space between the mist and the three of us

after they were gone

it was quiet again

the mist had turned to rain

and the rain was quiet rain

On the shores of Crystal Lake

1.

my shadow walks at night along the shores
of Crystal Lake, past spots where boys and girls
wade topless and smooth rocks press
against their arches
whistling handed-down tunes through ironclad lips
and waking the neighbors, who aren't above
turning on each other

Crystal Lake wears capes of long grasses
that catch the wind, toss it around
and mistake it for echo
my shadow wears these capes
on the shores of Crystal Lake
they sound like *soon, soon*

2.

body hollows, body bells
the body is resilient
determined to pleasure
so much body more body
than one woman can hold

cut to a goat eating chevre

toast points balanced

in delicate hooves

it commands you to listen to the train

you hear a train

this happens somewhere inside us

Steel Thistles

Ingenue. Sits on a bed of nails.

Sexpot: is constipated.

Hippie chick: wears homemade hair tampons.

Alterna girl: listens to the Cure in the car. In the rain.

Punk hot: likes her short hair pulled.

Breck beautiful. A field of wildflowers.

Cunted by inheritance

Cunted by ignorance

Cunted by small minds

Cunted by time

To take the veil

Flammeum protects me from evil

Velum (long e) also means sail

Hinting at erotic potential

Grassroots

They fucked in the traincar, a dusty old boxcar,

gashes of sunlight, sun swords, radiant pillars,

folds of light, razors of light, light bars,

Bitter and relieved

Rapidity

Rapacious

Randy

Rutting

Doing something new

Running into my reflection

At full speed

What is clear makes the rest look doubly opaque

The rain was late in arriving.

Spring's old civil servant

Night's old civil servant

Eros's old civil servant

Consumptives in search of delicate bone structure

Parched butterflies on steel thistles