

Motel 8

This is the middle ground, a place for peace treaties
in various forms. Across from the Waffle House,
a neon billiard ball hangs like a bloated moon.

Beer bottles shatter and come back together, always,
somehow, amidst the smell of butter and ham, stale
pizza and cigarettes.

A man stands alone on the balcony smoking a Santa Fe.
He turns his face toward the dark sky. Smoke
escapes his mouth and becomes a cloud around his head.

Behind him, lace panties dangle from the turning doorknob
and a woman appears. Her hair curls like fine ribbons
around her face. The tattooed sparrow on her shoulder is disappearing.

Everything resolves here, everything. After a few drags
and an exchange of hushed words, the figures slink back
into the darkness, two shotgun shells chasing their tails.

Christopher, After Columbus

We hover low over the river. His eyes are shining,
wildfire breath coming in gasps. Wildebeests
stampede through the tall grass below us and I pray
to God everything works itself out, one way or another.
His hands are rough like mine and my father's
before us. He's fast undoing the knots and then
a dead weight falls away. When I look back
down, all I see are ripples across the surface
of the dark water, the disappearing backs of crocodiles.