

## In Case I Am Asked Why I Bother To Wear A Cross Anymore

There is ground in belief. Little known fact:  
You kneel when you pray to get a better grip  
on the Earth. The fear is that God'll pluck you  
right up where you stand if your shoulders rise  
too high. If you scrape the clouds too much.  
The penitent know there is more atmosphere  
than there is world. That holding on to life is  
a worship of a kind. That there is always more  
heaven to tumble into.

Church helps. Vaulted ceilings to catch those  
in danger of hurtling skyward. Communion  
wine laced with holy tryptophan. The Host weighs  
Eternal in your stomach. Don't know what that is  
in pounds, but it works. The body of the full and  
faithful curves naturally to the wood of the pew.  
And the steeple doesn't reach that high out of  
want. That lesson was learned at Babel. No.  
The tallest cathedral is for the worst sinner. Yes.  
The tallest cathedral whispers up to the shadows:  
*There will always be a chance for you to come down.*  
*We will be here if you do.*

You should ask me instead what I miss most.  
The rooms that live only by the grace of a  
candle's heartbeat. The love that jumps within  
the lilts of a choir. Knowing offhand the difference  
between a quiet and a silence. Knowing I will be  
caught before I shake hands with oblivion.  
I miss promises that crush.

You do not lose God. He takes you. In pieces.  
One by one. Until you chain the last one  
around your neck. Your knees do not reach  
the ground anymore. You pray with hands  
emptied of promises that you will not fly.  
Not yet. Not yet. Not yet.

## A Close Reading Before Juliet's Statue

I don't know how star-crossed got to mean. I don't know. Whatever it does when we first hear it. Like literal. Like the night sky blesses those who exhale their lust to dance with the tragic they inhale. Nope. Star-crossed means the night sky just writes your number in blood. Cross like doom, I guess. Which makes sense. I don't think it's ever a good thing for the universe to know your name. I've been saying. A name is a tricky business to begin with. Fair city pulling you apart with it. Solar power spilling out of your throat with it. A pox boiling the flesh on your hands with it. I look back up to the town square. As empty as it has been. Will be. Is. The night sky pushes into the ground. Curls its tail around the offering that's coming. I speak love into its ear. More stardust dribbles over my lips. The moon blinks another year away. The stars begin sketching their paths. I don't imagine we're about to start housing the memories of the things we kill in gold.