

Have You Seen Me?

At once, I am everywhere
and nowhere.
You think you glimpse me

admiring candies like gems
in the halogen glow
of the gas station.

I am an apparition,
selling magazines or gum,
school supplies.

The eyes could be mine
anywhere. At the end
of the jet bridge, clutching

the cuff of a stranger. Flyers
are my paper tombstones,
pinned like corsages to telephone

poles. A leaf, I
float through holes
in the jungle gym, in you.

Time is my plaything. Age progressed,
I am taffy. Stretch forward,
pull back.

Look at me,
and I disappear.

Skywriter on the Radio

Like locksmiths, skywriters
absorb their fair share of abuse
from poets. I'm surprised

to hear the last one in New York
live on the radio. (Though perhaps not.
The vestigial tails of their crafts, wagging

one another. Thump
thump. Heaven-made
bedfellows. The skywriter

and the radio. The three of us implausible
as ever: The poet writing
about the skywriter on the radio.

Did you know we are an incantation?
It's true; If you say, "A poet hears a skywriter
on the radio" three times in the mirror, a Romantic

appears: Shelley, with his pussy-bow
blouse soaked from drowning
in the Golfo dei Poeti. He will pour

out his shoe like in the movies,
and a small silver sardine will dance
in the light at his feet.)

The skywriter speaks of slicers, which blitz
the imagined fingers of God
and faces in the clouds for his celestial

vandalism. The hot, smoked paraffin
and oozing exhaust he leaks
to write love on a blue sky day.

The messages are needy, force him
to fly backwards while holding
a cracked button for smoke with his thumb.

A pocket mirror taped
to the dash reads the hazy
plumes back to him as he hangs,

a bat in the cockpit,
upside down. Mid-scrawl he checks
his work like a schoolboy who stops,

halfway through a B
for the presence of the dotted line,
but this craft is limitless, un-college ruled.

The M's and the R's are the impossibles.
Ask for double-backs to ward off
W, when the world is inverted.

The alchemy of the R,
at once yearning
for bent and straight.

And yet, the skywriter
on the radio written
about by the poet is undeterred

by the earth as a ceiling
and not a floor.
He writes it, difficult and forever,

MARRY ME

Improbable every time.

The Man Who Got off the Train Between Madrid and Valencia

I had been on the train for
two hours. The cliffs of Cuenca
and their small bird-nest houses blurred
into arid bramble for miles.

Along the embankment, hundreds
of brown rabbits pulled their bodies
back into burrows
to elude a metallic beheading.

A small wave of life,
brown on brown in the desert
where no one lives.
(Years earlier in Spain, I lived

with a *familia*. Horrified
when I went to peel a *mandarina*
and two rabbit ears,
white inner hairs still pert,

stood straight up in the trashcan.
I politely spooned
rabbit stew for lunch that day,
hoping my voodoo was reversible.)

Slowing, the train rolled into a station,
deserted but for a dirty sign
ventas with no teller
and a film of dust.

Through the window, I saw him
step off the train.
Jeans, brown briefcase in hand. A weary
walk. The walk of a man who at the end

of his working days
lays down in his clothes
at the edge of the ocean.
Lets the small waves sink him into the sand.

There, he ambled out,
straight into the *campo*.
No homes or fences for miles.
Just the rabbits and me.

For years, he was my talisman.
A patron saint
of loneliness. The man
who walked into uncertainty.

A magician of memory.
Did he vanish? Die?
Had I witnessed him
walking into the desert or

imagined it? The way
a grenade aches
for a man. Or a film, spools silent,
without a reel.

I told only one man
about the man
who got off the train between
Madrid and Valencia. The man

I'd made a myth about toeing
the line between nothing
and everything.

He said he could love us both.

I married him, knowing
that the stations and all the spaces
in between
belonged to us.

Dreaming of Tomatoes in Antarctica

They train for Mars
here, that red planet's
ghost. A twin separated

at birth, no, stillborn,
icy with rigor mortis
in the joints. But

somewhere in Lombardy
There is a field, intraversable
with green, humming

with flies. A casita with earthen walls
and a clay roof. A terrazzo
where hot hay and manure fill

the nose. A terrazzo where skin
goes dusty with pollen. A terrazzo
where one becomes a flower.

There, a lacquered pot
sits split by the growth
of roots, creeping from the cracks
like garden snakes.

There, a tomato plant hangs
bent with fruit. Large,
heavy.

That red globe waits
dewy
with 1,000 seeds.

The Last Real Cowboy

The West pulled him like a planet.
I was simply another star drawn

into the field. His Oklahoma, full
of yellow roses, hand-rolled cigarillos

and dirt, red as blood for miles.
The thunderstorms perpetual only for me

now. The brilliant white hinges
of an invisible screen door, showering sparks.