

Tesknota

Below nimbus clouds
it rains in California

and leaves fall to form a wet
orange mosaic on your street

with colors bursting,
as you had said it would be.

I imagine being held in November
below a three star night sky

when a tuning fork is hit against a tree
and my heart rises to meet its pitch

as the waves do when they crash
against the shore.

In the spring I wait for the fall
the place in time where you still exist

as a body within my body to hold me
when nighttime shadows make me cry.

Dreaming by Yeats

I have lived in less sane places than this,
where a mother without a mother
becomes a child,
and a child without sleep
no longer dreams.

Those first years after,
Ima was lucky enough to be haunted by
Mammy in her dreams—
 Ima, who I used to call Mama.

We used to live here but then
there was a turn—
 the center cannot hold.

Remembering when you are less

Grandpa used to measure me against the closet door.
In someone else's home there are pencil marks
where I am still 8 years old.

I am smallest remembering hiding in museums,
walking through a pine forest.

I am smallest with Ima, sometimes with Mammy there looking,
Fading—
 she did once say that we like to keep parts of you small.

Campanile

On Valencia and 14th Street
we stood aside and watched
the center of attention shifting
from the past to the present
an event later described, inaccurately,
as distant and dishonest—
 we had not realized that it was only a hope of becoming.

A storm always hits as we drive towards the city,
familiar bridges hidden behind clouds
dimmed by the red sun.

My own heart beats me in and out
as various adored voices repeat,
 “We will live here.”

But I respond each time with the most important question—
 “Do you wonder about the view from the bell tower,
 And can you tell if Strawberry Creek has flooded?”