

GENERAL RELATIVITY

In my shower

I find myself  
between the lines,  
staring at white, porcelain tiles  
a bit too hard, a bit too often,  
wondering why  
the water drips,  
into the basin, into its coffin.

In my kitchen

it was sometime  
before you left  
or maybe after,  
mixing ramen with "Chicken Flavor"  
watching the noodles unwind  
thick like strands  
from your woolen scarf,  
steam clinging to the frosted windows.

In my bedroom

I lie at the edge  
of the bed—  
upside down.  
Paint sheds from the walls like skin  
revealing a tender, yellow tinge.  
Maybe one day  
the roof will be gone,  
the room exposed to the heavens.

General Relativity,  
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But today rain beats  
against my windows  
where my room is reflected  
and the smile that folds  
on my upside down face.

15 lines

COMPASS

In the river, city lights shimmer  
like foil or cellophane.  
Deep ink sinks through these open veins  
that once flowed with elegant grace,  
Wider than the arms of any god.

Out they creep, squeezed between concrete  
like a lung stiff with tar.  
Shallow breaths, tense zigzags, cuts  
back and forth under billboards,  
Strait space. pinched in. hands of autotheists.

Still, the crane stands, eyeing the line  
of steel boxes on the highway.  
Garbage slithers in the current's wrinkle.  
She lifts her leg, then sets it down,  
and listens to the wind's ancient whisper.

SUMMER '99

Cold PB&J's on heavy summer days  
in waning August afternoons.  
We run and JUMP! off long wooden docks,  
pretending we are airplanes (and they, our runways).  
Our wings cut through the air,  
lifting us above it all...  
Until...  
We plummet into the lake, chilled.  
In the van we bunch wet towels under sopping swim  
trunks,  
as mom drives past pines and maples, the rhythm  
of the pavement plunking along. And the smell of  
golden dog, her coat matted, nose poking out the  
cracked window, puffing--  
hoping for the slightest trace of a whitetail deer.  
The plastic alligator raft, tucked in back,  
that I soon grew to be longer than.

10 lines

STAGNANT SWAMP

In a stagnant swamp, the last fish breathes  
the last molecule of life. He swims  
through the broth, thick as soup,  
past bones of those before him.  
They swish against his fins  
like porous stone, beckoning  
forth a now foreseeable fate  
unannounced but understood.  
With a final "thwack" of his caudal fin,  
before he too becomes the stagnant swamp.