

Restoration

Give me back my summer. I don't like orange.
Return my aqua, coral, yellow. Let me squeeze
more lemons into sparkly water and spill
foamy waves and oily grit on baby toes. Let me taste
more tomatoes split into stars - I am not hungry
for the dark dirt of soup. Not yet. Let me sweat.
Give me strong thunder from a green warning sky -
five seconds between flash and clap, and cue
curtains to dance. Give me a new pair of sunglasses
and easy hours to lose them. Let me squint at clouds
and blink, and let it still be summer. Cast haint blue
with torches after midnight. Give me more time.
Give me more light. More life. Grant me bright
noisy nights to prove it: seventeen-year-old alarm
clocks, chanting frogs, neighborly cocktails
laced with sharp pink ice. I'm wary of the wiles
of blankets and easy chairs. Give me back the fireflies.
Let them land and stay.

It's not enough

rondeau

It's not enough - a house with air.

Invite the dirt, and leave it there.

Emancipate the child's excess -
all joyful splotches, every mess
in candy-coated disrepair.

Let tiny palms hold worlds, and tear
apart what they've assembled. Rare -

these sweetest days, without redress.
It's not enough.

An instant twinkles past, then where
it travels next, we do not dare

conceive. Inside of our best guess
we breathe our air, we whisper *yes*,
for one more footprint on the stair -
It's not enough.

Beats

Authors, it is said, are read,
and writers get paid
(when it's not pretty).
So, who gets laid?

What can the poets have?
The sound masters
The word musicians
The meter-minding
drummers of words?

We raise our hands and
wait to be called on.
Is it always the quiet ones?
I'll sit with Charlie Watts.

Brains aren't bones

There are ways to mend a break. Copy, paste
the mistake and change the rhyme. Everyone:
make past tense present. Convert liquid to gas.
Press the pedal to the floor if you can reach it. Pull
back on the yoke and fly higher. Crash. Breathe
the thin air until it gets dark, unless of course
there's rain. It can always look like rain. It might
be a good idea to stay broken for a while
longer. Stand in the rain. Watch for lightning.
Wash the wound. Wish. Brains aren't bones; you will
heal differently this time.

Afterward

Afterward, pay with the card that earns miles. Wrap the leash around your hand and walk back to the car. Think about that spot on the fire road where people leave tributes to dogs. Decide not to hike there anymore. Drive home. Park your car in front of your house and don't go inside for more than an hour.

Afterward, feel gross and regret it like you knew you would. Pretend to get a text from a friend. Pretend you're in a hurry. Forget your keys when you leave. Go back for your keys.

Afterward, buy a bottle of wine at the grocery store. Order a pizza. Eat half of it and go to bed early. Wake up at midnight, sweating. Turn on the overhead light so you can see to change the sheets. Feel better in three days. Don't tell anyone for almost four years. Never tell your mom.

Afterward, shake hands with the veteran who played taps. Blow your nose with the Starbucks napkin you found in the glove box. Think about how you never have tissues when you need them. Decide that keeping ashes on the mantel is creepy. Think about how much water humans are made of. Don't think about heaven.

Afterward, take him to see your new house. Show him his new room. Show him the attic where he can make forts and build Legos. Try not to think about how sad his dad is. Show him the yard and the lemon tree. Take a walk to the ice cream shop. Know he's trying to be brave. Watch him for signs.

Afterward, meticulously design all the possible outcomes in your head. Settle on the best bet. Wonder why you're like this.