

Mirror Box

i.

Imagine a gun firing
next to your ear. Imagine
the constriction of your muscles.
Freeze the shock. Take
that state of your body,
pour it into one location –

your arm. Take that mongrel,
twist it behind your back.
Place your grasping fingers
in a vice. Now make your arm
disappear.

Leave the throbbing
in the ether.

Your invisible bones
forever bending, never

breaking. I would show you
where it hurts
but when I point
to the pain

I point at air.

ii.

Slumbering limb
needling awake.
This is how

my arm feels
some nights.
This is how
the void

where my arm
used to be

feels.

iii.

This box
is a confessional.

I enter
alone. Remain alone.
Just me and the ghost of me.

iv.
The hand in the mirror
is not real.

v.
This is my hand. That is a mirror.
That is my hand's reflection.

vi.
Each fingertip feels
like a déjà vu –
something that has
and hasn't happened.
Something alien
and intimate.

The muscles
that don't exist
begin to unclench
like the jowls of an animal
releasing, allowing
you to live.

Only when I look
directly in the mirror
am I free of my phantoms.

vii.
Ask me
to point
where a void
unlocked its jaw.

Ask where I reside entirely
but there is only air and reflection.

I point at the box.

viii.
The hand in the mirror is real
enough.

Scalpels Mean Nothing to Regret

After the procedure
I weigh a pound less.

Here is the scar to remember
how I was sliced open –

how something trying to kill me
from the inside

was stopped
like a terrorist's plot.

Before I slipped under
the white cotton

anesthesia haze
I asked the surgeon

to cut out the other stuff
that was poisoning my blood.

When I come back
from the induced depths

the nurses say they didn't even try
to locate those infected memories

or suture what feels like perpetual
injuries blooming inside me.

I am recovering nicely
they tell me.

I don't feel any different.

Invention of Light

In the bowels of Mexico
there is a black lake inside a cave

where sunlight was extinguished
centuries ago. In this lake resides

a small colony that swims
in darkness and blindness.

Evolved beyond sight. Now born
with two tiny vacancies in their head.

As far as they know, light
has never been invented –

and the rest of the world
doesn't exist.

Until something snatches one fish
out of the current of his life.

He would say it was the hand of God
if he knew what a hand or a god was.

He doesn't have a name
for the scientists either.

He falls asleep to the sound of beeping monitors.
He wakes to an explosion in his skull.

Duel detonations where new eyes are placed.
Everything happens at once. His heart explodes.

The scientists are never sure if his heart attack
was caused by terror or amazement. Take note:

longer live you live in shadows
allowing your eyes to turn to sink holes

the more harsh the light will be
when it finds you.

Distant Shores of a Split Second

Over there, the sun was
a million miles away.

Over there, kisses
were lips and soft breath.

Over there, injuries left
only the tiniest scars.

Over there, my breathing was unlabored.
Gravity weighed the same, yet I felt weightless.

Over here, my breathing is a shallow grave.
My lungs are filled with anchors.
I am drowning in thin air over here.

Over there, I walked on cement, black top, concrete, cobble stone, wood.
Over here, I find ditches, sink holes missing man holes,
black holes, trap doors, quick sand.

Over there, the animals were satiated.
Over here, they are hunting and feasting on each other.

Over there, flowers didn't need soil to bloom.
Over here are blossoms of rust,
the gardens are junkyards.

Over here, the light at the end of the tunnel is just another train.

Over here, mosquitoes steal my blood
to feed their young.

Over here, sleep is one breath away from death.
Over there, dreams are where you
fell out of your eyes.

Over here, our bones are fragile as little crystal horses.

Over here, the banks are bankrupt. The doctors have no cures.
Prayers are whispered into dead receivers.

We wear pelts of extinct animals over here.
Our world is powered by fossils on fire.

The departure to here is a door clicking shut,
a hand letting go, someone staying silent –
whatever severs a thread in the timeline.

Over there is a jumbled continent of coastlines
eroding as the distance thickens.

If I could take my eyes off the fractured horizon
I would see I'm standing over there right now.
You're over there too. But not for long.

Everything will be perfect
when it's no longer here.
I will tell you about it
when I get there.