

Waiting for the Metro

The earth wraps its limbs around
the color of my spine. I can see you,
standing in the doorway of your heart,

your drawings like mango,
a mouthful of sunset tossed
into your selected lap,
the translucent shooting
small as a rabbit, thin
as a spine of pearls

my dear
against the beat of soft night
the specimen of your voice
is abob in the eager trap of itself.

When I say, *help me*, I do not mean
Give yourself to me
You are all that I need
My world is improved by you.

When I pull at the splits
of my hair and skin
there is something just past you
that I want to get away from.

Nothing like love to let itself out
into a night of strangers
buttoning their chins
turning to the dim light.

Untitled

Sometimes people feel needed less and less. The air folds me like an extra blanket.
The air is a part of the touch of a shoulder. The room is quiet in the thick air.
I would never worry when all your heart thickens like a collapsing structure.

In space, your limbs fold out. When you disappear, the air unbuttons.
I examine the dimples in my skin through the bedsheets. In the morning,
I spread my fingertips like a lost doll. In my car, a piece of light spits
through the windshield. We are not alone here, you of the opposite direction.

At times I taste like cold breath when the room is empty. At times the space
is like a large bird, I do not know how, just watching. But, when I was home
and the room was dark with blinds and burnt-out bulbs, the muffled murmur
of the apartment next door, the porch dusted with pollen, a half dozen letters
rambled onto the table, I invited the bird inside and gave him what I had.

Stars

Tonight, house lights glow from the hills like the fattest stars.
Plump with the day's satisfaction, you thank your lucky stars.

I'm at the sink washing plates, at the window,
you are tampering with the stars.

You never know if the light comes from within them
or outside of them, but everyone else knows the stars

do a bit of both, we all reflect things. After all
even you reflect stars

or share space with them, are aware
of the existence of large pockets of light; tiny stars,

I'm at the window, drying dishes and watering the plants
perked up by the light of the stars;

I am imagining plants breathing, they are aglow in cell
regeneration, they are like stars

in that I don't know when they start to die
and so they die; we are like stars,

too, I don't know when we started to die
but the whole world is doing it. Calculated stars,

we're set afire. We burn through existence.
I shake in my bed and walk out to the stars.

There are clouds tonight. The street

lamps flicker, like stars.

Pentecost at the Minneapolis Institute of Art

High cheekbones press to the fatal sky,
new halos like yellow suns,
throats point in shadow.

The language looks like blood
to me, the symbolic bird
something ominous,
to be feared, emanating
lines on blotches of blue storm.

I am told that these are tongues
of fire, and I take my own cracked
hand into my pocket and finger
the holes of my keys.

The tongue is a spare line.
What wonder the eyes feel,
splattered into cells
and amphibious. In the days
that followed,

and the days in between,
did they wipe their mouths
with a spare or resolute
desperation?

What pulse the skin feels,
thickening like a blaze
beneath it.

illness is

the opal you called a pearl; the sun in a polaroid you
called the spots just a whiteness with breath that burned.

earlier,
your unclaimed moan filled the room;
what we have here is losing

air and water, palpebral response:

the doctors poke around for more but cannot find it.
your gasp is purple like a sawed off tongue
and in September,
a month that was invented,

cursed, held and wasted -
there is a magnet on my fridge
with brighter air.

what space can we give you?
what space do we have to give?