

*To My Brothers*

Once we were alive and young in a summer  
that was as new and naïve as us. Thinking  
we walked where none had walked before, ruled  
in secret spaces between brush and brambles. In a  
kingdom keeping hours from dusk to dawn we ran  
and screamed and shouted — until we had banished the  
threats that lurked at the periphery of our imaginations —  
specters that by day would be stark and boring reflections of our lives.  
The stars remember the secrets we told them, even if one day we  
do not. Forget the smell of wet grass between bare toes or  
the pride of bloodied hands full of berries or a sun that  
burned our skin as surely as our hearts burned with  
the importance of the innocent — undeserving  
but unashamed to see in the world what  
we wished — and nothing more.

*Viridi Nocte*

Summer takes and does not give back, but offers in consolation  
its beauty like a window – endless heat to fill endless nights,  
stretching back to those that have passed, will pass — those that are passing even now.  
I fell in love with a friend and never said — I found my first white hair at twenty-one and left it,  
for by pain it was rightly won, or so I told myself. Perfect days spent with perfect strangers,  
while joys that I can never share with another fade from sweet to bitter on my tongue —  
I lost something, and in losing it, found it too dear a price to pay.  
Summer kills, for it always remembers  
the tenderest moments that can make you— break you —  
like a pale flower tuning its face to a rain it knows it will not survive.

*Carolina*

There is a stone I keep on a shelf from another place,  
another era, heavy with the weight of time.  
The joy of its discovery, of mud and silt sucking my fingers  
as I pry from the ground its treasure —  
impressed on my memory like the sleeping spiral left there  
as if for me alone to trace and remember the years I  
spent with you, my old friend, and wonder at the  
hours we spent making our own adventures, when nothing stopped  
us from seeing gross importance in our every action as if  
we were a force of nature — unstoppable and unchanging —  
though time and time again She reminded us that we were not.  
You were almost hit by that station-wagon; I cut my chin crawling under the road.  
You got sick on sunlight; I burned my hand on a coal.  
Yet we pretended to be fearless of all things except spiders,  
and when we returned to the world of striped couches —  
of blackened hot dogs and marshmallows — we would  
reflect on our adventures while picking at sunburned skin  
and plan new ones for tomorrow. And while  
fireflies passed like alien travelers in the night,  
we heard a song that we swore none could ever surpass.  
What I've done since then seems far less important than  
starting fires and turning over stones; craning my neck to catch  
a glimpse of the milky-way splattered on its cosmic canvas;  
the secrets we'd have to tell now would make  
the ghosts of our childhood blush.

When I worry that someday I will forget all that  
we were and are and will be I touch this stone —  
a relic that will go on long after either of us,  
and think: “Time cannot change what time has made,”  
and know these memories will never fade.