

## Remnants of a Russian Spacecraft

The parabola was invented to understand  
falling. Even in mathematics, the parent  
function calculates the life of its bending

product. Translation becomes the child—  
in the movement are the parents. But this  
moment is about landing and landing

hard: the unusual path of metal  
and its exaggerated arch to Malaysia,  
falling into the rainforest with all the force

of earthly shame. In the charred engine,  
was there some memory of snow? And how  
do we extinguish the fire of our origins?

The orangutans were staggered  
in the trees when pieces of the  
Russian spacecraft burst into their lives—

it can be painful to be at the other end  
of a formula. They are not the first  
to hold the object which has hurt them,

to use its sharp edges in a small act  
of love in the middle of a humming forest,  
grooming each other with foreign material.

## The Fissure

It has to be high tide, moon  
at its strongest, or the halves  
will never separate: twelve  
times a year, the sea cucumber  
has the chance to break free  
from itself. Alien twin floating  
with its creator, each wave  
pulling the creature apart.  
I can understand that, made  
in your image: that severance  
is natural and everlasting.  
Who is this woman who looks  
so much like the thing that created  
her, returning to the point  
of separation? Half of grief  
is trying to decipher  
what's missing. We stayed  
in the ocean deep into the  
night that summer, the waves  
in South Carolina pulling  
us into the world. Sometimes  
the fully-formed specimen  
might allow herself to feel  
small again—to scream at  
the crest of a wave and be held  
by the father, dripping under  
this new phase of the moon.  
Regression is a science like  
anything else—the study of  
how creatures return, why they  
go back to the birth place, especially  
when covered in blood. And  
now there are three of them:  
the sea cucumber, its fissured  
half, and the tiny tear that implies  
the phantom attachment,  
healing in the salt water.

## Brief History of Magic

I think of Khadija, fifteen years older than  
the prophet Muhammed, their love practical  
and immediate like hands cupped for water.  
In the majority of caves, no miracle  
has occurred. The angels' ascension to heaven

is not what arrests me—it is when the disciple  
cannot read. It is how, like a father, the angel  
takes the mortal finger in his literate hand, tracing  
the linear path of language, and reads the holy

message aloud. I am patriotic of this galaxy,  
the black holes that hum a wavering C,  
octaves below what we can hear. That the  
crying comes from within the deepest parts

of this universe. What were those three monks  
doing together anyway, observing the sky  
a thousand years ago, when they reported  
witnessing the moon's explosion? On their

three searching faces, was there  
evidence of fire? The stained glass  
at the maximum security prison chapel  
bears no portrait. It is layer upon layer

of primary colors and so like a childhood:  
blooming in the background, informing  
how light enters. I think of the man  
dancing after a day of mixing cement,

building a place for someone else  
to lie down. How spectators from the early  
UFO report, seen an hour east of Seoul,  
described it as a halo divided  
into two. As in, two dancers stepping away  
from each other in coordination, light  
shining all over the space between.

## Translating Metaphysics

Whales speak a language based  
on terror. Human is hunter.  
Human is weapon. Human floats

on the water like cloud, their sounds  
click through the ocean, expanding  
as warning. A candle burning incorrectly

forms memory rings, tunneling  
narrowly to the end. This is to say  
that a flame only burns one way,

trapped in its pattern. Is our speech,  
too, not made to name horror, to shout  
the thing that kills you? Our long

history with the word mother, perhaps  
only record keeping: Mother. Now no  
mother. Perhaps only a word to yell

instead of flood. The difference is  
that when you ruin a candle, it is only  
a candle. This whale with its need for air,

its only environment unlivable. I understand  
an inability to hide. I understand being  
obvious: where is a woman supposed to go

besides the surface with its winking light,  
the sound of crying moving miles through  
the water, circling like the greedy wind  
of a hurricane.

## Oyster Shucking

The larvae are free floating, punctures  
of life haunting brackish water. We know  
that the shell becomes too heavy to carry,  
how any organism understands a downward

trajectory, can feel the end, and after  
two weeks of swimming, the oyster must attach  
to a structure, securing itself as this  
new exterior, both changed. Being born

able to create its own cement is only  
a biological feature, hardening,  
against all odds, under water. The oyster  
holds tightly onto the life inside

and dies with its attachments. To be spawn  
is to be ripped out with a special knife—  
never knowing the father, filtering  
that water to the end of the world,

understanding the fact of the boat's  
shadow, how we must admit that,  
yes, for a moment, in this vindictive  
daylight, yes, it brings relief.