

Blue into Blue

~After Richard Bruland

When my grandfather asked to kiss my left elbow
and down my stomach. I learned the meaning
of shame.

When my parents asked me to leave that meaning
in the foyer of St. Sebastian's like a rain-glazed
umbrella next to the holy water fount.

I found that I couldn't

and kept my shame buried in my stomach and
left elbow- afraid the stain glass St. Peter
would illuminate me

for the whole church- Priest and all- to see.
Then I found St. Peter's eyes (two pieces of
agate held up to light) knew guilt.

Felt it as three crows.

And in those quiet moments of the
consecration of the Eucharist- head bowed
My shame became the holy spirit flying over the
vestibule into smoky light.

Capes and Comics

Show me a hero and I will write you a tragedy - F. Scott Fitzgerald

The day your adopted mom left you
at a Shell in exchange for fuel
the cars and hours slipped
into inked twilight and coyotes
yipped around emerald dumpsters

you began to wish not for the warm
back seat of her Volvo,
but the comics you left there:

Superman, Batman, and Spiderman
Left by each of their parents
to become something much greater
than a simple Hero.

As the last coyote sang to husk
of moon, you tugged the red cape
closer to your shoulders,
felt curb and sidewalk fall away

the world is so much smaller up
where you are born and held
tight by wind.

The Kind of Blue

-For Fathers

It was the kind of evening where you and I
were content to lay half open against each other.
Light was low and the old 1940's windows were
pushed up to let in any sauntering breeze left in
the summer air.

You told me about the time where you waited
an hour for your father at Grand Central. The
father you hadn't seen in years.

How you hid your hands in your parka pockets
from the cold while the train station whirled and
edded with people old and young, going places,
coming from places.

All of them oblivious to the sway of his blue tie
over his shirt as he walked slowly towards you.

It was the kind of blue stolen from a blue bird feather,
or a frayed electric storm. The kind of blue that was kept
in good china and huckleberry. The kind of blue
you never wanted to let go of. The kind of blue that
soared through your veins.

1981

It was closing time.
The last of the clothes were left
folded in clean, neat stacks for the next morning,
all laid out beneath the photo of his daughter riding
a chestnut morgan. His ex-wife glittered
in the background.

He locked the doors to the Laundromat
and joined his partner outside.
He couldn't help but think back
to the stretch of field of his hometown
the train becoming a beautiful rattle with the moon,

and this here, right now, all the city
lights aflicker like some kind of magic.

*Here we are two dying men
and with you I'm home,
he thought.*

His partner had his hands in his pockets,
and his eyes glanced from the concrete
and back up, there was a serene
kind of strength caught up in them.

He wished then, that he believed in time travel,
he wished he could go back before 1981,
before Regan became president, before they
discovered the Titanic, before AIDS had a name.
Back before he left his ex-wife,
it was just the sunlight
his partner sitting on the edge of the bed, playing guitar
a lyric caught in the air
like a sparrow in the rafters.

Having it out with Jealousy

I try to avoid her,
but she finds me
in silent corners
disguised as
flame

some days
sulking in shadows
of my favorite coffee shop,
a paramour's new love,
sings the way a cello does.

She pours down
my tongue
like molten jewels,

my throat
a chimera
ablaze with her

she, sultry as smoke
reminds me
I am not
everything

she, luminous as firefly
she is everything

I will never be.

I catch
her eyes,
two swallows

a glimpse of
my hands when I speak,
surrounded by blue,

I remind her
I am the light
imagination
sweet

I am the body to her smoke
to her filament
to her figment
to her bitterness

I am everything
I am everything

she is not.
she will never be