

Baggage

Carry trash in your purse, not your hands—
unneed and unhelp invisible and light until collected in a pile heavy
like leaves mopped with rain.

Search a tissue for your own,
find the noses of 5 others,
almost still sniffing
the empty mint tin.

Empty—peppermint was the only herb you had the day you were called on as healer.
Carry now in your hands now when you are tired,
let them see what they have taken as it is represented in what they've used
filled
emptied.

Pulp

Product and prodigy of every available
vice laid out in front of you like outfits chosen for a portrait, presented as
presents, origami birds and strung shells, something you won't throw out but won't
remember till you nick your toe on its edge and find you don't scab anymore.

You're made of liquid now, golden like ore burning your tongue and throat but
gilding your guts, now votive wax hardening again once the dollars have been
collected, fire gently
killed. An icon to mock imagination, heavy like a pregnant coin purse, blind as
a handful of stones.

Whispers waver like vapor dampening your skin left ignored,
rising like a dead log on water, carried
of your own, unrecognized will. Stones fall to the bottom of
streams, coin purse spills, but emptiness goes unnoticed in the dizziness of
movement, chosen over meaning, frozen-
over splinters and splints barely keeping you
limbed, alive.

You are, why?

Missing the marriage of stone and coin, skin and sane, sanctity is an echo to sting your
ears, reverberating your ego, swollen in death by the side of a river, any river—any

bigger and it would miss the string of shells, the paper birds, molding and malleable, once malignant, now medicinal in their recognition, a what to why, a when to where,
a once,
a want.

Theogony

I've learned the names crocheted into chains leading to your warmth—
sounds soft from holding on my tongue, swished
like mouthwash to disintegrate preconceptions of
“you”
and what's left settles crystalline in my teeth,
grit in the grain of your letters, enameled.

I see your grandfather on your face. An infinite, an infinitesimal—
your mother's mother's mother.

You are quilts and patched pants held together by the difference between two bloodlines
and you have been seen before in cracked hands and admirable noses.
Your name echoes in the valleys under their eyes because
they screamed it from the mountains in their chests
when they found the lives they'd lost in your first cries—
you are the sum of their hopes like
a sandcastle that has never heard of the tides.
You will always be shelled and flagged in their melting memories and
when the time comes to carve them in stone you'll find grains of yourself settled in their
corners,
a keepsake, sacred, clutched close by a child.

