

Mercy

opposing the blue and white sky,
over shivering bulrush reeds,
a monolith looms slate grey and high,
fulsome in the light of eternity:
heaviest stone of my failures,
a monument to futility,
an obelisk to honor defeat.
I chase flitting white lines—
the prison break thoughts of
my fugitive mind—
and avert my involuntary eyes,
pleading spinning sphere to
catch the gears of time and
oblige my shame.
yet this stoic tower remains.
it will be despite my velocity.
it resists my distance.
my memory is fallow and without yield.
it claims no mountain, only shallow field.
the present blurs, but slows and recedes,
its speed dampened by
those penitent bulrush reeds
bowing to a supermassive object
warping gravity.
and I am without peak or valley
to obscure the remembering of
that which will not permit my leave.

but ahead of me,
to the east by degrees,
I can smell the endless sea.

Lately I Can't Remember My Dreams

I wish they were grooved into
me like rings in trees,
or raised like braille beads,
so that with a needle I could trace
my skin and at least listen
to etched echoes of
reveries,
or feel what's real from
fantasy.

The Homeowners' Association

the realization grew on me,
as I watched the livefeed from my holiday retreat,
that the same Potemkin society that now tells of “boundaries”
simultaneously fells whole walls of green—
spired trees summoned down like an
archangel choir drowning in grief—
to elide the space between
a walgreens pharmacy and a wendy’s.
and the high-resolution camera lens I use to surveil my den
failed to capture the moment when
the fence behind my house shattered.
the police came, as if it mattered—
a blue line taped over where the dark was opening wide,
identifying no cause or crime but the loss of time.
but it was clear when I drove
past an exhumation that was once a grove,
that it was deer,
fleeing in manic fear,
from the tenacious machinery
of a rapacious malignancy,
who threw their panicked, lactic bodies into that timber
in order to remember
object permanence,
or
to leave a dent in the plastic firmament;
sent from where the wild things go no more.
how are we allowed to tear our skin with our own nails?
how dare we mock our ancient kin
with our hairpin borders and rails—
cheap facsimiles
of what it has for eternity
built to apogee
and returned to seed—
and replace the rhythm of renewal with a cruel algorithm
that crawls like blind worms,
turning everything black
and leaving nothing to grow back?
what tool remains unbloodied?
which prodigious ground has provided more?
we forsake our indigenous lore.
we forgot.
like when I got home
and had to throw out meat
I’d allowed to rot.

Slip

I sublimate, dilate—
manic buzz from melty laze;
leaning, lurching lizard-brain—
at pinprick introduction of neurotoxin
point zero zero two tick tocks
into cold blood faster than
flash flood or
nerve-conduction.

City of Goodbyes

in this city of goodbyes,
hear streets riot with the clamor
of what's ahead and behind,
sounding off together.

in this city of goodbyes,
keep coordinates of homeless hearts;
movement is the marching mind
afraid to be apart.

in this city of goodbyes,
say tonight, "I want to be heard."
for trees to oblige, align,
without another word.

in this city of goodbyes,
stretch but tear not the woven night.
in the unmoving skyline,
find me in a searchlight.

in this city of goodbyes,
stand out your orange on my blue.
when this world grows high and wide,
mine will shrink around you.