

Planned

I packaged my path
like a diorama
like I was in grade school
the illustrious box becoming well-loved
the most desired, worthy picture

my fingers spreading apart the grass
flagged with coarse stones
straightening the worth to shine
a young, velvety forest of easy choice
that my coarse voice swore was hard

Worship

Mouths and breath sing among
The devoted, bored, joyous, tired, antsy, fulfilled
Collection of hearts

Walnut-brown pews with a view
Of clean cheeks and suits
Fresh hair and lips and dresses

From the back of the room
My eyes land on the one beard
I imagine scratching it

I imagine screaming with him
A smile tries to escape, barely hidden,
Burdened by resistance

I play a game
How long can I stare
Without uncovering my perverseness

No guilt occupies my house of prayer
Just fuel pushing my arms against
The white, tight sleeves

It's the smoke rising from my endless rebellion
Up where only men sit high
In the vast, windowless room

I'm deserted by pious men
Yet reclaimed by sculpture, mountains, sex, compassion, sky, anger
That satisfy my humanity

Like the hymn warms the worshipers
Like the river gives a wilderness direction
Like the smile leaks from a transformed mouth

In Pursuit of Forgetting You

I chase swimming in ocean
brackish hair and flushed skin
rough fingers
from porcelain broken shells

not sunsets
not briny tangled swimsuits

I chase my hometown
golden hills and eternal sun
nostalgia as thick as honey
pools and ripe avocados
the chilled and lovely solitude of a shaded white oak

not streetlamps flowering shadows
not twilight eyes or lips

I chase poetry
someone else's free and ragged visions
arched glossy structures on pages
unrepressed and delightfully searing

not sonnets or sculpture
not stringed arias or exposed throats

I chase kicking up earth on a steep trail
endless breathless meadows
birthing musky wildflowers and whistling primroses
the exploding moment of revealing the glass body
a sparkling cerulean under clear sky

not deep riverbeds
certainly not rushed breaths:
sighs of contentment or yearned, exhaled lungs or hearts

Her Transition

I walked the road
 Like she did
 Only it wasn't like she did
I was still safe
 With the ocean of fear before us
 And hope one grain of sand
Even when
 I held her hand
 Put my arm through hers
 When cautions filled the air
 When Liptight looked
 And looked again
 Shrugged her shoulders
 Or laughed
 Or both
I could still be
 A saint
 Or invisible
 If they wanted me to be
 A non-complicit partner
I could still be
 Lifted from the mud
 Fit into an understood space

It's different for her
 Because she's special
She may be
 A shock
 For a moment, years, always, or never
 Confused
 A sinner
 Deceived
 A liar
 Infinitely and concretely
 An object
Erased
 Are the thoughts, complexity
 Tears, joys
 Impossible choices

Reduced
 From a sky of brilliance
 And possibility
 To violence
Yes, a road
 Our feet knew together for a time
 -preparation, burning, courage, change-
 Stays accessible to my memory
 But it's no longer looming
As our hope
 Becomes the ocean
 Tide and suds freedom
She will have
 Heaviness yet to come
 Waiting to pound the surface
 While mine is far behind
Yet her waves arch
 In infinite possibility
 Serving daily those who are scared
 To change
 Without her

Possibility

The wind lands on my windshield
It's a maple leaf
From corner to corner to stem as wide as a phone book
Lying on the glass it doesn't move in the wind
Like it's caught in a vacuum
Instead of drifting through the streets

I'm a maple leaf
Caught up in chaos yet inclined
To pause and accept
Filled with possibility
Incarnate in my intent

I'm a yellow leaf that's turned over
Left her fiery collection
Observing the sun rise and set
Travelling and being still
Like it's the earth that moves
Instead of me