

False Bravado

She walks into the Monday-crowded café
To wash away the cracked-dry privation
With a steaming cup of coffee.
Accustomed to being noticed,
She opens the door widely.
Her false bravado
Swinging along with her long sleek, dark hair.
Her eyes, glassy and black, meet mine,
A razor-sharp second
She is me
A tender shoot of reed
Before toughening.
Counting on no one noticing
The purple bloom of bruise
Encircling one eye like a Spring pansy.
She commands her shoulders down and back,
Greedily sucking in the room's strength
With her weighty breath.
She enters the place full of strangers
Awash in a newly, damp cloak of normalcy.

Camp

The first day of camp
I got up late
Long weekend nights
Sluggish blood protesting the morning
I prodded you to hurry
We arrived at the bus parking lot
A minute to spare
I made light
Attempting to gloss over my morning frenzy
The packing of my bag for tonight
The unpacking of my bag from last night
The weekly divorced shuffle

Throwing lunch and camp clothes into a bag for you
Dinner on the stove for my absence
Freshly washed clothes out of the dryer
No time to fold
Hurry, scurry, worry, weary
Did you apply sunscreen?

And the words tumbled out of your mouth
Like little flames
Once, then twice, then a string of fire
Mom, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry
There you stood
Raw innocence like beads of sweat on your forehead
Your green-russet eyes wide with melted honesty
My deepest, greatest love and joy
Blaming yourself for my messy life

Familiarity crawling up my neck
Clawing my veins
Exposing my own deep apology memories
In the sticky July morning

Orange

The orange hung by a tether so thin,
So much promise in its rough, orange skin.
Imagined the sweet, succulent flesh on your tongue,
Quenching your needy thirst for desire, sweetness,
and acidity in one.
The bruise was the problem,
On the opposite side from where it hung,
Obscured from view,
Away from you.
In the breeze it swayed,
A little too virulent was the sway,
So you looked away.
It fell, with a plop and a splat,
At your feet,
Sweet liquid glistening your legs,
Revealing its dark innards.

Bare

The morning sky
Is a white-gray fog.
My worlds view is a fence,
To keep an empty pool in,
And the horizon out.
I can not see below.
Or far above
That desolate sky.
Only unswervingly out into
Nothingness.
Not a bird flutters by,
Or a plane to lend
A sense of the living.
Wait, the top of a tree,
I do now see.
Merely a few stray branches,
Devoid of leaves
Eluding the solitude.
Perhaps another day,
The sky will return
To a kinder hue
And buds will sprout
On my lone tree.
Today though,
It is just the lonely sky,
The too-tall fence,
The bare tree,
And I.

Threadbare

Threadbare starlight
Glimpsing the moon from behind an eclipse
Laughing away the shimmer dust from my eyes
Flaying through the universe unbridled
Love's oblivion swinging loosely on my coattails
Time rolling through my fingers
Like a fake on the player piano
It is not all absent contemplation
This pursued life
Chided by the literal mind
There is something more
Than what is contained
In this tiny space
We occupy.