

## **Once luminous streets**

Once luminous streets,  
scattered with snow and power lines,  
are unlit.

We hold 37 funerals.  
We mourn the Belmar boardwalk,  
and wave to Casino Pier, lying in the ocean.

We go back to the shore to find  
the bungalow next door has been  
swept away by the sea.

We bid goodbye to one of the most influential entities of 2013.  
Sandy ain't no candle in the wind.  
She's not forgotten by  
20,000 people, waiting to rebuild  
a year, two years, five years later.

They start with what they must save to survive,  
living in the upstairs in the meantime.  
Their walls, roof, and floors fester  
when the FEMA funds run out.

War zone or shore town?  
Definitions stretch like elastic bands.  
In the sweltering cold, what's enough and what should  
blur with what's happening, and what's understood.

## Star Jet

I remember the Star Jet  
sitting in the ocean.

I remember  
sitting in the ocean

I,  
sitting in the ocean,  
remember.

3 cars,  
2 riders,  
6 per train.

Cold steel  
in  
cold water.

Cold steel

sat under  
the jagged edges  
where the boardwalk ends.

Its loops

and turns

and drops

rising from the ocean.

The metal structure  
felt the waves go by,  
lap away at it.

Exposed to the air,  
it started to rust.

It's gone now,

But man, was it m a

l  
o e  
u v  
r s.

A n d

wow, the

American flag

perched atop it.

It could have been

the new Statue of Liberty.

## **The violet hour**

An ice as black as  
the soot in the chimney  
after Christmas has passed  
coats the branch outside my window.

The robe hangs in the air,  
half of it touching the ground,  
creased and deformed.

Death is an unpressed garment.  
Too true to be real.

In a pulverized silver truck,  
futures become tenuous.  
Words vanish from mouths.  
Treatment becomes necessary,  
as broken windows become escape routes.  
Seconds of violence mix with wind and gravity  
to wound whole towns,  
to crush lives,  
to allow an ordinary family to rise up,  
a wave above their circumstances.

I wouldn't go outside  
But, they did.  
I feared the storm  
They didn't.

## **I remember**

I watched my mother  
Walk out into the ocean.  
I remember wondering  
How far she would go.

After their fight,  
I remember watching my mother,  
hypnotized by the water,  
wander out into the ocean.  
Wading through the water,  
she must have been so cold.

All I could do was  
call out to her  
in selfishness:

Mom  
Mom, stop  
Mom, please don't do this  
Mom, please stop  
Please  
Mom  
Stop.

## **Transcripts from My Cousins, after Harvey:**

Five years later, it continues.

August 30, 2017: When Mark went back to the house on Tuesday afternoon, the National Guard was starting to patrol the area. This is just a PSA from our Katrina experience: if you think you can get back to your neighborhood, make sure you take your driver's license with you for proof of identification/residence. He's going back today to see if he can move more stuff upstairs that hasn't gotten wet. The less we have to claim or buy, the better.

September 2, 2017: We're beginning to dry out. The water is out of the house, but not the neighborhood. Mark estimates there was about 10 inches in the house. Not bad considering neighbors around us have much more. He did a big clean out yesterday, with only one snake removal. We are on lists to get tear out and clean up, when the house is completely accessible. For those asking what you can do or send, there isn't a great need of anything right now (except sanity). I will let you all know as soon as we know what is needed. Thank you so much for all the generous offers of help.

September 6, 2017: 20 years today with this guy. To celebrate we've decided to renovate the downstairs and add a clause to our vows to include something about storms of biblical proportions.

September 20, 2017: Almost no trash in front of our house! We're getting ready to make it a home again!

February 18, 2018: Ready or not, next weekend we are moving back in! The house won't be finished, but we'll be home. One step forward and two steps back is the only way to describe the rebuilding process. Note: the utility sink is not staying in the entryway and the toilet is INside! God is good.

March 16, 2018: "Changes in latitude, changes in attitude." I could write volumes about how getting away from the Harvey aftermath has been therapeutic for my family. #goodbyekaty