

Still

I used to trace my lips along the side of his forehead right next to his eyebrow
a flat surface notepad skin against words with verbal silence and he closed
his eyes translating warmth cupped his hand along my lower cheekbone
hummed chest breath light in the morning when I woke and he was still
asleep the sun filtered through bunched blinds forming soft wrinkles along
the blanket the ceiling our sky stitched white cotton congregation of feathers

rooted to the mattress epidermis to each other perpetual

periods at the end of our eulogy...

Levels

I watched the rise and fall of his chest
as his eyes darted behind their eyelids
and wondered if he ran
towards or away from
me in his dreams
in my dreams
I floated on my back
in the middle of a volcano
peacefully
exchanging layers of my skin
for greater levels of heat.

When I woke, his body
on the opposite side
of the bed
room between us.
His arm outstretched
restricting passage
but his hand lay atop my hand,
fingers stiff yet warm
enough to spark
atomic movement—
the mercury rising in my glass heart.

The Middle

A plateau in the middle of the ocean we descended into the salt and the shallow barely grazed our knees bent to push off the sand floated our bodies upon the surface face down eyes embracing striped fish bubbled thoughts slick stingray wings without flight waving ridges rich colors undefined underneath and outside my skin.

The bell from the boat beckoned us back from our embryonic siloes to the uncertain tilted floor peeling paint warped wood welcomed my bare feet grounded upright beside the other unknowns finding the hands of their knowns me alone this entire time I realized he was still struggling against the smallest waves like a child desperate for attention.

He cried my name into the crashing his limbs splitting the water my words evaporated encouraging him to be unafraid for once to stand on his own and brace the distance too long rope thrown gripped pulled heaved forward heavy the air in my chest sank his fingers into my arm grasping my veins propeller eviscerating minutes closer to land.

1/4, 1/2, 1

four people sat around a table mostly still completely silent
staring down at their plates identical vegetable omelets
fork/knife into the faded coagulation scratching against ceramic
and under the table, pointed ears exclamation alert, shrill barking,
sending shockwaves along my spine.

my “love,” his mother, his younger brother,
and I, one of the four, one-fourth there in a dining room
divided by half-walls and pain-
ted in sunlight leaked through the glass doors of the balcony
that remained closed but not reinforced
and cold air snuck in through the cracks even in the summertime.

my “love” hunched over his breakfast protective
funneled food directly into his esophagus forgetting my breath
caught in my chest when I reached for his hand
and he swatted it away convinced that my only intention
was to steal his last slice of slightly burned toast.

his mother spooned sugar into my coffee for two
years I’ve aged grown fatter made to be complacent
with beverages silverware food that’s not mine,
and my head bounced yes please thank you
even though she knows/ignores
that I prefer my coffee black.