

### **This is My Memory**

“It’s a humidifier night”  
I say as we do  
to catch the surreal or god with the familiar

she runs with me to the door  
and we step together  
into the moisture, a January air, somehow warm and full of sky—  
the fly-through kind seen only from porthole windows  
in the space called “altitude”—but fallen down now  
to a back porch in Austin  
and the arms of a live oak that split the stones to grow

and she says “this is why I love you”  
and we dance to get the angle of the only light left  
for a memory that we call a “picture”  
of the droplets drifting  
in invisible currents through the night

### Lesser Captures

I walked this morning  
into the room that held the heart of me before it held the death

so many wars paint the ridges of the patterned walls  
and leap out in stale scents when the door pushes,  
dulling and dampening like a clenched fistful of mausoleum air

guilt-drenched little pieces—shards peek out of places unfound by eyes, by sun,  
by anything but the piling of dust  
slit only by the fingertip of the living body

letters, aspirations, lines, that served as proof enough of future

like the rings on the glass coasters—tacky, translucent—

passions, beliefs  
once as bolstering as the chipped mug  
steeped in dark roast and a billowing steam  
that cut the cold to caress the chiseled face of afraid

and spoke tenderness into me  
who could now be tidied away with the wipe of a cloth

### **Upturned Glasses**

Her upturned glasses rest on my desk as a reminder of the view one will build to escape  
inhabiting another's

When the window opened  
and the sky pulled the piled petals through the wall, leaving one clinging  
caught only by chance in the clutches of repurpose

I smiled and built it as mine

But the swelling mounds in memory bursting with recognition told me it wasn't

they told me it wasn't mine

but I needed the sheen—the peeled backing of photographs to reattach  
themselves—to let me gaze with clouded eyes  
on pixels that find their symmetry because “fate” and “sacrifice”

and I did and they said  
and all my life I heard that's what it took—the risk, the loss, the redemption, the joy  
the well-worn tale of every story

but I think it was a lie

**Amherst**

I wonder often  
if through photographed fields and rolling wheels—  
the radio silent for the sounds of scratching pavement—  
if the memory finds

like overturned leaves become a tumbling column,  
a soft tornado of papered decay,  
that dies away if you try to step inside  
or touch the spin, in some childish fingertip whim

but there is no eye you can reach  
no sacred space saved in the chaos for you

so you straighten your back  
and steer—steadied—as the white lines tick past  
and the upturned dust floats in your wake  
suspended—safe—in the reflection of your mirrors  
and only until it is out of sight

where it will be gathered, packed, and pressed to the earth again

### **Dickinson and Triumph**

If I could find you now—  
in the whispered crevices of fallen timbers that surround,  
in the stench of spent oil or blackened rubs on knuckles—  
I would cry  
and not the hollow kind,  
but full, ruptured,  
shaken loose from the vibrations that have sored wasted muscles,  
locked joints in arthritic clasp on the trigger for so long that at last  
there is only—alone—left  
in a mind that remembers your drums, your dead  
your prospect tasting of retrospect  
and the tyranny—my own—  
contrition now of bayonet