

*Forgiveness Constellation*

The moon light  
plumbs down  
through passing trees,  
blinking  
butterfly kisses  
onto my arm.

The same arm steering  
this car through  
a darkness so full  
of life and light,  
and thoughts that  
pour in,  
hiking  
the shame of  
the self-blame  
I harbor.

Its possible  
the moon knows  
more about myself  
than I do, but  
its not the one  
who could forgive me  
for what I am,  
and how I act.  
Only I can.

So I see momentary  
constellations  
in broad blue skies  
because my eyes  
look up.  
Just leaves showboating  
on the winds

of relished seasons,  
cold birds less  
coordinated, rising  
at a wind's whim  
to test their wing,  
their hardened  
curvature free from  
chlorophyll,  
leaving a grand  
nest of branches,  
now flapping  
their wing ever harder  
giving me  
a moment to understand  
how they ride  
invisible waves to ground,  
how illusion  
disguises them, so  
briefly ten to twelve  
constellate,  
and I forgive.

*Pocket God*

People in the midst of  
empty exchanges or  
people ducking

away from responsibilities  
because, damn, do  
they seem to be popping up

everywhere these days,  
even though we have  
a prettier, more refined God

who will spare us  
from the truth  
with empty images,

who waits in our pockets to buzz  
and break us away with a worthwhile  
promise somewhere down

the thin line on which  
we teeter-totter  
tensed over the abyss,

as we blindly reach  
to like photos of different people  
in different poses with different captions,

and masks that cover masks not faces  
cause so many of us have no idea  
what “countenance” means,

or if Aleppo is still burning.

Now its me smiling  
in the midst of empty exchanges,  
or me seeing the reflection

of the mask I've put on,  
or what laugh I've falsely  
employed, only feeling shame

at times because I have to  
keep up with the times,  
keep playing the game

that bounds me, but allows me  
to write, and I thank God for that,  
the one inside me, not the one

in my pocket who I have to go along  
and play with because if not  
others will forget me,

but I can't think about that  
so I think about hand railings,  
compostable coffee cups, pretty girls,

anything to keep my mind  
distanced from the sad truth  
of these days, from the face fixed

with melancholy, or that pocket bible  
ditched on the ground outside Bartlett  
because someone has already been saved,

and now it's liter.

*No Talk*

I woke up to a dog's  
silent face beside my bed.  
A strange noise too,  
but the dog, the noise,  
told me to go back to sleep.  
So I did, and, incapable of dreaming,  
slept solidly for another hour.  
A strange reluctance arose  
when I awoke.  
Thinking as slow,  
I didn't want to discuss  
banalities with the folks  
downstairs in the kitchen,  
coming and going—  
coming and coming—  
through guazy shafts  
of early morning summer-sun.  
The day was heating up,  
becoming uncomfortable,  
but I slept once more.  
I dreamt of a car ride with friends,  
a super-crescent moon  
suspended in plasma,  
or I don't even know what,  
and a fraught community.  
Then somebody said,  
"I'll always be here, breathless."

*Salvation*

The lamb has redeemed itself simply  
by doubling back to it's God  
The sun looks down on it—  
one last lullaby of light through  
the thinning grey of the clouds—  
slowly gyring round the tree  
where at one time  
it perched as a bird  
and peered down upon  
where it's blood now deposits.  
The God  
cuts clean across the lamb's neck.  
And its clear it's God,  
when the deed is done,  
loves to drag it home  
through the pastures  
where lowly grass,  
ashamed witness,  
soaks in red.