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ALL NIGHT VIGIL

A Thesis Presented

by

NATALIE LYALIN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

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MFA Program for Poets and Writers

ALL NIGHT VIGIL

A Thesis Presented

by

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Misarubka

That flock of sheep is puzzle hearts. I wait after school for safety.

I put cotton in my ears and float to dimension x7y giga heart maggot. The sweetness factory. Everyone is a flower and human rafts come to shore. The sleep language is what the eyelids did to each other. The stay on x7y giga heart maggot is brief .

The mothers turn icy. I raft to shore with the ice mothers. The earth is not ready.

I am here. A bigger version of me above myself. I wait after school for a string of numbers and ice cracks. x7y giga heart maggot is best reached by a river of schools and numbers. Break your arms off row to shore Hallelujah.

Watch The Village

I know someday I will barbeque and throw my head back. I can see the iron now.

I would document my new life as a beaver human.

Below us water pulls itself and nothing makes this everyday, not even thinking of that cowboy. Sitting here, tiny leaves stuck to our faces, we smell thunder, at least smell it approaching. The densely packed bushes trap heat, the branches kaleidoscoping the chimneys.

Autumn. Sugar. Bloodspring.

The leaf of you, the bend
fire flicker for the Kazak.
A tree swells and calls on itself,
a mother mothers somewhere behind your knees.
The grass was softest where you left it,
lit up in the field, in a safe place.
Have you swaned it? The careful migration,
a predicted wing flap, and what if I was tiny.

School is for the smallest of children, waiting for
the smell of it, maybe returning, maybe arching.
We collect it in sealed jars, and there is a piece of you.
In a porcelain veneer your back cracked,
bloomed to say it was coming. It's the twisting sign,
the way those red branches unfolded.

A) Geography

A) sand dispute. A) bus divergence. A) zebra run.

B) The cannon party back porched. B) The way your skewer smells.

*A) landlocked continent. *A) river in a time of rivers.

“The flight was lovely.” “Only a piece of me is missing.”

A) bunker. A) way to harvest. A) small force still brick travels.

B) The way a belly looks. B) The essential rice. B) The journey to the middle.

A) glacial need. A) shift in continents. A) crank to push it.

B) The scatter line for other lines. B) The something strands.

*A) rush to cockpit A) field study. *A) way to spiral.

Goose Necks for the Baby Baby

This American Pumpkin, father made a cube of it
Drive on a whale bone holding geometry, a physics, and bitted work ethic
Say reconstructed like you mean I never flew at night but my nostrils closed
Bear left at the barber shop and come through
Sit down in an eagle nest while fawns birth a forest
Mrs. Bernstein, my symmetrical head is on that freight train

The Patterns

Your memory foam leaves it behind,
the magenta outline of coming to something.
A potato sack human slept there, curling root toes,
growing green in a moisture lock, in a hassock, a halo.
Genital imprints made track turns,
taking a bite of super dolphin, super skin.

It is not in a cupboard, or the cherry farm, or eagle nest,
it does not defecate, and that could be a miracle.
A housed clue spoke through wires,
sparked the wing curl, the print of fur feather.
A cross stood in rubble, with a fireman, a boot,
that is a miracle, a holy ghost, a way to powder.

Two Schoolgirls

The two schoolgirls were crying
with skin hanging and the sound of
rocks coming together for a party.
A party plate is disenchanted and
I'm not sure about the gas station.
Let them curl here and spray the water.
The roses are blooming to the inside,
fifth grade is stretching out. A factory
smokes and I'm not sure about losing.
That Showalter. That Jones doctor.
Now all the legs are coming apart.
I took off my stump and stretched
in the sun. The weeds chocked the
vines. The vines snapped their fingers
and moved forward.

Miss Sarajevo

Wears her own crown. By the entrance, flowers.
An idea of learned helplessness. Such as, when a
child does not know where to find a new glue stick.
Such as a pageant, where lucite strikes the faux-
cobble stone. Diagrams reveal an overlap of interests:
tennis and high fashion. Tennis because of hyper
balls and high fashion because of cruelty in
the swagger. Miss Sarajevo walking across the stage,
by the entrance, flowers. A sense of removal from
that which is violent. From that which keeps
entering itself into the pageant. A unicorn is a mythical
being, much like Miss Sarajevo, walking somehow
straight and not at all violent.

Fear of Flight

I'm working against the memory of aunt Raisa
choking toward the toilet. She's a snapshot
by the train station, not a tumored head curled on chair leg.
So why not wipe grandmother. Ask me again about visiting.
I sold my favorite book for America.
So the children will know a different winter.
There really is no variation between takeoff
and landing. In between I resign myself.
I will not let the memory of the Hermitage go to waste.
Even at seven the black square painting was pondered.
And Lenin mattered as his brain sagged the scales,
So I will no longer be a president. Something left me with a pop.
It was the continent I created, etched
into a memory of feeding and an America.
And, no, it is not a disappointment. It is also a continent
dislodging food and rebuilding body parts.
I'm buried somewhere in a sandbox.

The Bursting

Father, the way the skins move slip, tangle on the feather blood. We never forget train rides, suitcase bedding, and automatic shut-off. Why did you bring these here? Here, you knew the skin and holding, the chicken heart, the wing scatter.

Why did you see the grace in neck bones? Why touch the feathers?

Father, how small is the chess piece? The hawks are quiet as you approach to turn us sideways. Father, there is weight in the water, a drop for feathers, a distant call. Here the paper curls under, blue as a bed sheet.

Conversions /

In the nebulous of pushpins you stand sideways / Look through your eyelids /
The debriefing of Polaroids / Before we leave/ Let's find your white gloves /
Go to Europe and model / Your arms are glorious / Your nose a ski slope /
A forced piggy back / I wish a car talked to me /I was a German phenomenon /
In an old video hair is so so giant / Knees are/ Pale and more than beautiful /
More than a third of the kids live below / The poverty / Line/ The girls get pregnant /
Is this food authentic? / Is it spicy? ?/ This depends on a standardized test /
This depends on familial history / Etiquette rules / There is a 67% dropout rate /
This is a lot / We are breaking up large failing schools / Walk down the hall and see
roller-skating / A dreamer has an attitude /I am somebody

Black Cadillac

In the photo is a black Cadillac,
and yellow flowers explode over her head.
She, holding a mug and not ready for the photo.
The flowers, they are levitating in the air,
or is the photo in a kitchen?
She, looks ready to saw through arms,
or is that Thanksgiving?

Calf's Blood

All I do is drink calf's blood. I've sent up black plates,
black pots with stars on the bottom. I burst out.
Bud the ivy plant and cut diamonds, walk
and scatter chicken feed.

By land, your city is a long journey.
I'm not sure if the sea comes close to your city.
The streets are left over on your continent,
the four of us are buried, perhaps.

Budding in the remaining shapes or colors,
and what is left hold our last heartbeat,
as if we linked arms and closed together
all in agreement that this is no longer our continent.

Mother and Horse Parade

That clasped and withered in the remains of.
The bootstrap marks the last place visited,
and it was an intended disappearance.
We are not made for this life. And mothers
say this with pride and lead the circle.
They take children into bodies of water.
Where the river splits a shoe is visible.

Pink and Hot Pink Habitat

They shoot up, the stalks with globular color
with stiff tissue layers poking the air.
You arrange them in water, but do they need water.
The answer is yes. They are alive.
When knocking a vase over, backhand it,
send the globs flying. When visiting college,
you learn that glass is liquid and sloping down.
Backhand your college choices. Arrange an arrangement,
fit into a houndstooth jacket. Get a small pipe,
a dried mushroom, and an antique locket.
When people come over, show off you closet.
Your ancient corsets and slovenly coats.

Weird Horses

My brother is the dark horse, the Trojan horse wheeled
in at dinner time. He misbehaves in the grade school,
and he will always misbehave. My brother is the gyroscope,
a brute fog over corn fields. I could still drive home.
At this point I can still drive home. I have friends in
classrooms. We make plans together. We make a type
of machinery not known in these parts. We cackle in the
light of geese blocking out the sun. My brother is a chaise
lounge, burning in small forests. Licking up the tree sap,
my brother is a madness. A perfect kind of madness.
I made some plans for supper. I swam the Yangtze river,
Oh I swam the hallelujah hallelujah ha-lle-lu-jah.

Jeffrey Bloodhound Sans

I know him. To know is dimension,
a black bot with star spangles. Have
a sexy birthday. Have an amalgamation.
The language was just delivered and it
is good.

I'm holding secret.
This situation. Countdown. Speeches for
if I don't come back. I'm not coming back.

In profile with gold necklace. The quiet ears. Study the
nose. Today I become naked Ingrid. Would Ingrid
mind a morsel of finger fat.

Girl words. A tomato. A plum. An apricot.
Time is holding in a clear tube.
Time is lightning on a spare key.

Words that do not yet exist. Alibubo. Bubsigtree. Grivstalbikt.

Buffalo Cuffs

End stop errand boy and the wave that saved him
comparing shoe prices glances lit up, family time the breath of horses,

Telegrams, inkblot, quill change, prints that daughters leave behind spindle with
two legged feet rivered section cake making troops,

Treeless ravine and petal marks, hesitant beast, hairlocked chin star breaking the
sidewalk, teacher born, teacher pointed, teacher dancer,

Huff committee, diamond crane and sink, gem drain diamond whisper, nailed
saddle, coma of your favorite spot, electric paddle and thrust strokes They hear you
still, voice box annie, the winter's horse ride.

Oh My Father Was Arrested

Oh my father was arrested.
He was selling things in the street!
Cigarettes in a carton. My father.
He told me much later. And I thought
his glasses, did he get to keep them.
Was he also scared to get in a truck
and our math notebook did he hate it,
are we all arrested and glamorous.
We have two outfits and our legs.
Later we shop for hangers. We are tearing
coming apart, no we are about to. We are
living for now. Will we save the breasts
of America. No, America will save our breasts.
But they will not look the same! And one is bigger!
Even the dolls have closets. And plastic shoes.

From The Suitcase My Back Is An Arrow.

The sky is lit up!
I live in Germany with the bluest sky,
I keep it in my sweater. Why is everything
melting. The fish we found in the frozen puddle.
You are my pet on a stick. Oh, waterfalls frozen.
At nine o'clock we do arithmetic, and at ten read.
No music for four months! Put us in that truck!
Chocolate for the ladies. Mini racecars for the men.
I'm dead right now and you have the cancer.
Can we talk about it. Let's talk about your cancer.
I have two sweaters. One has a house and chimney.

He Was Trying To Spare Her

A continent is not that far to carry your over and in her bedroom
it was evident that travel is circular. They had not made it whole.
Each decade brings a new barricade to toss a doll over. We were in that space
made by departing and then my head departed. I apologize to all my teachers.
There is not enough language to construct the scenery of what brought us over,
and how we got here is a mystery. And he was only trying to spare her.
Some parents desire to make a whole being but others pack up what remains.
Did they notice a shift in my continent. They did not notice a shift, but later a crack.
It is fine to lie about reading. The danger comes when you first understand the language.

Sitting Beside A Book You Say I Promise

The promise is made next to a heaving body,
and the hysterics are playing while your bones grow.

The phone cord, it only stretches so far down
and shoving a person in between is to let slide

the movement in the doorway.
I am trying to suspend against a memory of holding

as we barely knife each other, we could cut off
and burst through any room that contains us.

Proper Flight

When visiting friends
do not mention the altocumulus
stratiformis as they lead you
into a dining room and into the basement.
Locate exits and their precise location,
keep your body in a landing form,
and execute a breathing pattern
that will sustain you for the duration.
What did they think of as the plane
spiraled then jerked backwards.
Did they have to hold something
metal on the way there. Did they
wish for a different landing
and was it loud. Or was it silent
and geometric as nature.

There are Four Chambers of the Heart

There are four chambers of the heart, but only one holds a bent toothpick. One keeps the careful excavation of a mammoth and tusks the tiny pants I constructed a leftover bruise. Between the four of them, there are two secrets, and three ways for saying leafy webbings. The third chamber is the keeper of light and old school uniforms, also my apron and a busted lip. The fourth chamber is for unrepeatable things my father said a camel with three bullet holes a crushed pewter ball a dead rabbit I sent him to find.

There were two excavated mammoth tusks. Inside her mouth they found a pewter ball and a baby camel with three bullet holes. Also sand, and a delicate wrist watch. The mammoth froze with her front right leg raised. The cold moved so quickly then. She never touched the ground again. Only strapped on her tiny pants and soiled her apron.

There were three things I sent my father to find. Appendicitis and a brief hospital stay. The dead rabbit. It only reached the lawn after my father placed it there. I had sent him for the baby rabbit. It was too light for my fingers, but with my father it took on unnatural weight.

There is one thing my father said. I could hear it because he said it so loudly. I thought of the immigration officers. I wanted to tell them, we do not need a country. We can destroy ourselves here.

Otto Frank in Macy's

Arranging the shoe horns, walking
with customers, being very young
and unaware, here we follow Otto
as he dusts the glove counter, fixes a
broken light bulb. Look out Otto, that
jacket is on the floor, that hanger is
faulty. Ha ha ha Otto, clever foreign
Otto, lovely languid Otto. Naked
river Otto, fire building Otto, far
from quiet Otto, so complicated and
not seeing that much into the future.
Not pursuing the future, no, not really
looking into it. Otto on the spinning
teacups, on a wooden rollercoaster,
eating lobster (Otto in a big lobster bib),
laughing giggly Otto, drunk and angry
Otto, at the Nutcracker, front row with
a handful of white flowers, picking
mushrooms, Otto bent over in the forest,
with a straw basket and wide hat, Otto
driving a Ford, changing a tire, telephoning
all of Europe, Otto's rhetoric, his ideas on
war politics, Otto in profile, in argument,
riding a horse, carefully, at the dentist and
then buying some stamps, Otto, existing in
a bookstore, waiting for his taxi, carrying
baguettes and cheese, there's Otto in a
hammock, reading about native species,
filling out documents, at the Chrysler building,
at the airport, with a newspaper and clean socks,
Otto, somehow not realizing, on a wooden
rollercoaster, screaming, trying a cartwheel,
eating hot dogs, somehow not realizing, Otto,
at conception, before heartbeat, being human
(looking like a speck!) Otto, flying, Otto at
ten in the bathtub, at fifteen, a head-on
portrait, at twenty learning in a tight jacket,
growing and being amazing. Otto, of the future
in all silver floating with satellites over
everything, over colors.

Many Teens Hide Deepest Secrets In Plain Sight

Because there are stars for your teeth,
I'm using the gentle hammer to tap out

science. The diamond is flawed, deeply
grooved with rival glints. The hands move

about as if the hammer is joking,
as if I'm not serious when knocking the daisy

reliquary for our serious eye movement, our
pinched nerve ending. When holding a tomato,

light beams through the isles. How could you
know of phantom anything. Maybe I was never

ready to say parts moved me, then covered
us in leaves. And I believe in the abdomen powers,

grazing cattle and meeting in clearings, as if to say
I found something whole and feathered, with only the head missing.

The Animal Passage

The antelope braided shotgun,
the antelope braided with a shotgun,
a possibility of children flying past the truck tops.
Interstate blaring for the antelope
leading a parade, she moves the pots
and chops the vegetables.
Across the street a child goes missing,
a cheekbone is implanted.
Is the mother mad when she finds the child.
He is pearl scattered in the grass,
combed and glistening.

Freak Inside The Heart

There were exquisite surgeons under lamplight,
there was a breeze before surgery.
Before surgery the doctors took notes.
I refused to speak with Satan, there
was really no need for that contact. The mound
was small, there were so many other cities,
three hundred years ago bells still rang, and now
a broken steam pipe by the cemetery. I said,
the city is a comfort. I said, check the fire exit.

I said, clear away the thicket of berries, the
mess hall rang with spoons, the clocks pointed
to the end of talking, there was really nothing
left to say. There was a sort of honesty in our
killing. It made the rest sit together. It made
the news deliver messages. It made history make
room for us. It bought flowers in lieu of flowers.

Then they reconsidered knitting. Reconsidered not
offering rides home. They took out the kaleidoscopes
and gemstones. They made one giant kaleidoscope
and felt like gentlemen. Like gentle men.

Mathematic Horse

What to say when we found her. Ice capped. Hair bound. In the eye a hint of grandma a memory of chicken coop and the heart. There is earth and ice and earth and island. There is paper with etchings and brain function. There is brain function at various temperatures. Brain function in memory. In memory there are two islands. Two chicken coops. Two hearts. Always a measure of rib expansion for the extreme racing of the heart. There is always a measure of your father and his wingspan. The polar caps hold quiet. The hands that hold sleep. The egg of horses and migration. There once was a migration. What to say when we found her. Ice capped. Hair bound.

Decorating Committee

They carried knives that day and a theme was chosen.
The science club, their thermometers.
There is a theory that they knew what was knocking.
There is a theory that Robert, who sustained the first touch,
saw the microscope tremble.
Imagine the double doors and Robert.
There are a million and one uses for the glass beaker case.

Look at the way it bisects Susan.
Thank you for showing them the universe,
Dr. Putnam, your tie has never looked more appropriate,
peaking out through your back.

(Dr. Putnam sat in his office.
The science club was working on a new theory.
It stated that the atom was actually
a fragment of time, most likely two weeks ago,
crystallized, detached, and floating.)

Construction work and chocolate butter, maybe some sweater modeling, or a kitten of some sorts, and the place rings so loud at night, and everyone is happy to be there and you like it, and you want to buy some candy, and you put on all of your jewelry at once and wear a revealing shirt, and roller skates, and no one thinks you are cool, and you talk to a baby about not having friends, and she doesn't care because she's a baby, and the neighbor talks about G-d, and you like it, and you like all the colors and pretending to be good at sports, and your neighbor invites you over to sing about portable hand grenades, and your dad wears a giant top hat and your grandma wears a Choctaw headdress, and it's crazy but it really happened, and it felt like something sat down and died, but you found it had a treasure in its pocket, and you took it because that's what it wanted, and then the music came on and you felt good about yourself, and the world, and your teeth were crooked, and your nose was getting ready, and you had no idea that you were something, that something mattered, and that it was all happening and it was so beautiful that it could have rained in a slow motion but you remember your first desk, it was December, and the wood was cold but you sat in it anyway, and later a someone fat would jump on you, and it was pain like something, and you wanted to talk about it in a cup made for crying in America.

Pinhole

A yellowish liquid slid off a fang hanging
slender necked, the lady was trumpeting,
holding court. You have make a cuckold
of me. Stamp collecting and small photographs
both organized yet not in a natural order.
I wanted to ask about that night or that time
your ring slipped. The diamonds flushed
down the toilet. Pipes taken apart still
hid the articles inside themselves, as quiet
gangsters or stenographers. Is there a word
for climbing a stair in a most mysterious way.
To cut up a magazine and paste together new
words, magnanimous. To place a squirrel behind
a partition of almond glass an almost holy rite.
You came this way: a stopwatch and
sweatband included, hiding geometry in the
left armpit, and holding a dirty photograph.
My squid is just so deep down right now.
No spear or boy in fringed bottoms can swim
that straight.

In The Moment of His Stuck Out Tongue

In the moment of his stuck out tongue
we discovered loneliness. Discovered
how a sweater covers the body. A ball
skipped a turn and here are Octopi
in warm waters. There, we floated
backwards on a gold river. Even the canes
were polished and the day was a holiday.
Every small hotel owner closed his eyes.
The fabric fed through machines
with forever mechanisms chomping.

Two Jackals

The jackal dressed me in the storefront,
a jacket and wide belt, and lace-up shoes.
To a customer nearby I mouthed "Don't
leave me." The jackal's sinister intentions,
she did not want me to speak. Fine, I said.
Give me the jacket. And now the room is
dark. The exit blocked by a wooden cart.
I yell upstairs. The jackal is behind me.
A second jackal descends a staircase, raises
her arms, aims them out into her sister.
They retreat, pointing whole hands at each other.

Water Experiment In Two Parts

I.

A scientific study reveals: water is alive.

Equal amounts of water is poured into three identical containers.

Zelig Berken died fighting in world war II.

Equal amounts of rice is poured into each container.

Zelig Berken was twenty years old.

The first container is told "I hate you." The second container is told "I don't care about you." and the third container is told "I love you very much."

While Zelig Berken was away at war his entire town was evacuated to central Asia. As it was called at that time.

The rice in the first container turned black. The rice in the second container bloomed. And the rice in the third container rotted.

II.

Water is poured into two identical containers.

The first container goes home with Scientist A.

The second goes to church with Scientist B.

The next day, a droplet is extracted from each container.

The droplet from the first container shows nothing of significance.

The droplet from the second container shows formations stars and flowers.

The Everglades

In the dark there is always danger, don't fool yourself. Do not say that everything will be alright. The severed head on the bureau is just that, not a hat stand. Your grandmother is a zipped-up pirate and she's waiting for you to close your eyes. In fact, everyone is a pirate and they are waiting to kill you. Your teachers are Satan. That doctor who removed your appendix placed a micro chip in your brain. I don't know what that means, but it's bad, and frightening. You should just die now, you are nine years old and your nerves can't make it any further.

All Night Vigil

The idea of diamond dust on velvet
somehow brings together a missile crisis,
a place that holds keys to falling forward.
Move closer to a city, to a bakery,
point a rifle skyward. An apple shines
under a disco light, friends leave the city in pairs,
holding hands and tucking their pets under
white blankets. My father pirouettes at stage right,
the blue light bounces off his white tights.
All night vigil for Dijermo and Durango,
where I'm told no one dresses well.
I hold another vigil for all the times
I made grandma wrestle us to the ground.

All night vigil is to fly a plane on a holy holiday.
All night vigil for always rebuilding.
I ask forgiveness for not keeping an all night vigil
when the bombs keep a greenish vigil of their own.
I keep an all night vigil for my father's English,
for his Baryshnikov leaps that rival Baryshnikov.

When a light comes on hands are visible.
If there is an intruder, yell very loudly
and I'll answer. I'll call the police with
the red and blue lights. If only your body is left,
I promise a certain relief, as an officer lifts
a small section of hair off of your open mouth.
I promise an all night candle vigil for your body.
I promise to put my yearly reflections

in small columns. Like in St. Petersburg
in June and some of July. All night vigil
for not ever living there again. All night vigil
for a church that turned into a gymnasium,
complete with swimming pool.

I keep an all night vigil for the Kunstamer,
which keeps an all night vigil
for the deformed fetuses it houses,
for the fetuses too I keep an all night vigil,
because at some point they took a breath.

Another vigil for Anastasia's face
as she hollered government conspiracy.
She puts her leg
onto the train tracks and hollers
government conspiracy. She swings
us all around as her infants bake bread.
All night vigil for amputees.

All night vigil for Mrs. Emily Bossin
and spelling tests, green sweaters and parts
of New Jersey, Boston, and Atlanta.
Keep a vigil for all doctors,
what they don't know.
Taking bits of pink nose bone out
of nostrils. With a tiny head light
they see inside, but only so far.
No, don't tell me about that day or
paper flying. All night vigil for disabling

news service and all updates. I'm going
to carve something in a piece of leather
for a son to find. When shining a light on
dry milk, a text is visible. A sheath with
binding keeps the letters straight, secret
in a breast pocket. All night vigil for old
documents strapping parts of one family
to another. All night vigil for dead world
leaders. With this idea I sculpt a new
nose with my gentle hammer. Here,
the skin pulls tighter and the boats
take off toward the square horizon.

All night vigil is to roller skate.
To hold hours in a circle.
A little heat is extinguished by the rug,
and the books press whatever it is
into your hands. Documents.
Documents of a country years ago.
Photos of graying people.
To roller-skate without falling
is to complete a circle under spinny lights,
to photograph a rupture in the netting.

Düsseldorf Is For Sisters

One is Scheherazade but they both wear overcoats.
One traces rectangles but they both wear overcoats.
Are you my sister from Mom's uterus? Are you
using a fork in that way? Why does one flower
in our arrangement look so eaten? I'm sailing to you.
I'm sailing to you on white sails. On white cells.
I've recently counted my white cells.
One is a stirrup, but they both ride in saddles.
One has puffy lips, but they both ride in saddles.
I like names like Angela, Angelica, and Stanley.
I like Beuford, Blaine, and Tammy. Düsseldorf really
is for sisters. Please Bring in the rhinestones,
the leather purses. Bring on the hair pins
and lacquered horses. One wears a metal band,
but they both have pink gums. One doesn't mind
that much, but they both have pink gums.

We Are Almost Home

Though we did not see the Artillery Museum
the river erupted into circular fountains.
We were both called good boys,
and worked on our handwriting.

So what, I said, so the museum is lost?
We sat in silence and thought zoology.

The key here was the Mammoth.
Seeing the Mammoth was opera and ice skating.
I've always thought stretching canvases
sounds important. And here it was.
We left a green cannon partially exposed.

Now That Appalachia Is A Cardboard Forest

Now that Appalachia is a cardboard forest
the moon is an inserted paper circle traced on a quarter.
They said she was love personified. That's okay,
they don't need a forest. The green is somehow false.

She erupted into twenty thousand flitting hearts.
Into veterans, vetrinas, and what comes in between.
Driving to the new plot of land and landing on a stiff horizon.
They constellated and grided the entire city.

New York has twenty air highways arched above it.
I don't know New York. The cement is plenty
for construction, our forced construction over holes.

Great Sophias

There were two great Sophias
and a few good Dorothys. We enacted
inside the outside world of the mausoleum.

The mausoleum is by my house,
and I thought it was ordinary. I thought
it was all ordinary. I was Sophia,
but not so good at it. I loved Dorothy.

On the lake, the small swans stood on water.
I stood under a tree. Someone occupied the
Peace pagoda. It is not always certain,
a safe exit from the forest.

I believe their show was the first
to address homosexuality. Dorothy
loved the way she dressed.
They were dressed impeccably.

Vision

The world was not yet discovered.
It traveled in a galaxy of dinosaur bones and other fossils,
embedded in the ground, and waiting. Waiting for decades
when the skirts were different. When Mr. Parker watered
his plants in a light blue shirt with a breast pocket.
His hair slicked back, he boarded a plane to Africa,
where the lion still walked in bursts of grass.
In his light blue rental car, Mr. Parker took photos,
very close photos, of lions resting.
There was nothing to report back. The world lay silent.
The Giant Squid was silent. The continents were silent.
It was quiet as he boarded the plane for home. It was quiet
in the diamond mines, it was quiet in the coal mines,
and the Loch Ness monster sighed and waited for sonar.

The Miniature Life of a Raven

Cedar of Lebanon! A raven lives there.
It's okay, complimentary, because he looks
over the highway.

His family is waiting,
somewhere, occupied in nesting, and gleaming
the feather. Somewhere eggs open, crack
in that fragile way.

A raven on the verge
of his version of the holidays. Did you not think
they celebrated? Sat around pleasantly with
their jokes?

For a table they use a wood frisbee. For a door,
a net of hay. For silverware, some hairpins.
For television antennas they use tinfoil.

They have x-rays. Will travel, prevail over something
or everything. One could sit down and question this
particular raven about his uncle, his aunt,
his war hero grandfather.

He will never make anything more beautiful than
need be, will not use words like cool or glass or platelet.
He is aware of his un-mammothness.

New Jersey Seems Magical

Strawberries, horses, and bows become buttons. Become miniature Americana with traditional breakfast. We stumbled on a fair ground, there was a chained monkey. On another continent a chained bear. Spinning around fast, approaching something like a hypnotic nausea, the dance of the seven veils reminded us of delicious meat. Just when I realized how much of a girl I was I realized how much of a boy I was. Awkward with my big hands fumbling for the big buttons on her yellow sweater. She held me off with a fondue fork. Approaching something like the biggest ball of yarn we took pictures. We could have made a wrong turn anywhere. When driving it is always possible to never come back by moving to a new town with a new identity. I never told you about that camp in North Carolina. I dabbed blood on my cheek. I wanted to die there.

The Pale Dark Swan

The pale dark swan touched the tree top waters with clean wings of grain.
The beetle turned over and wept openly for spoiled harvest.
We watched from the sidelines as Alex scored, his heart said lub-dub.
The sound of heartbeats fills the room, lub-dubs.
Our swan is turning silver in the shades of burnt trees,
there is no profile. The pedophiles have curfews.
Their benches are painted. There was blood in the root cellar.
Katie never always made it home, banging a brush,
pointing her rifle. Ask me later if love can last.
The beetle jumped. All the fruit in the world was rotting at once.
Steven said goodbye forever. Dollywood is a place on earth.
Let's go stand in the storefront. Let's draw lines in the snow.
Our swan is sleeping on a chewed carcass.
New Zealand phones America. New Zealand is phoning.