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2020

The pillows of our palms

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The Pillows of Our Palms

Ella Baum

Thesis Advisor: Michael Joyce

Term A, Fall 2019

Hunts Point Manifesto

Sweet sticky air
Drips
Dry, hot mangos
And frozen tamarind

A shirtless man with
Tan tan skin
And a thick silver chain
Straddles the rust-red fire hydrant
Water avalanches into the street

He maneuvers the fountaining stream with a crevice-cleaner-vacuum-head
Through the nozzle sprays a directed stream of water
Showering the cars stopped at the red light
Running off the low riding navy blue Corolla
Streaming down the windows onto the sweating black pavement, and down,
In small rivers to the sewer drain

The spigot, angrily spitting into the street,
Wets the rubber soles of shoes passing by

The light is different in the Bronx

It is
Whitest
Brightest
Here.

Merciless,
It finds you
In the wide avenues

Plastic chairs and wife beaters

Across the street men sit outside the corner deli
They sit there looking so goddamn photogenic

People in Hunts Point
Hang out on the street
On decks
In doorways
And on the sidewalk

Groups on stoops
People on porches
Watching
Surveying
With sharp eyes and quick tongues

I feel watched
Or maybe I'm projecting my own spotlight.

I am not important
But I am different

We circle the block

The kids shake hands with the owners of the mechanic shop
We photograph,
The dog on the chain in the corner, and
The ceiling panelled with car mirrors
Everything reflects dully, at irregular angles
Off that plastic, knotted ceiling.
Lined against the top of the wall
Are hundreds of green car windows sheathed in paper
Algei stands in the corner
Petting Papi
He howls and barks when they walk away

Men sitting in cars
Stare out listlessly

Shoe strings drip off telephone wires

These kids are sophisticated
They understood the machinations of the cameras in under an hour
Relating the aperture to the iris of an eye
It took me years to understand

'He is not what he looks like'
Abigail says about Roman and his light skin
His melanin does not reflect his mixed ethnology, his *real* identity

Can it be a handicap to be so light
Caught between worlds
Torn from the one you identify with, grew up in
And displaced to another
Where the people don't really understand
That Roman had to mature because he has a single mother and white skin

Two mangos for a dollar
5 bananas for two
Mango ice for one,
Wilted dollar bill
In exchange for the cold white waxed paper cup
With blue flowers circling the rim

The ice is not soft
Not hard
It moves with your tongue
Ice granules so fine
Like sandpaper

The hydrant keeps running
A never ending stream of clean Catskill water
Chlorinating the pavement

Mise en Scène

1.

He's just so inanimate
He's like a wet washcloth
Or a bucket of water

2.

The hiss of heating elements
The slam of a door
The jangle of keys
The high pitched, pulsating murmur of a water boiler
Cars passing in the distance
Distant footsteps on stairs and rugs
The chapel is loud
The chapel is empty

3.

I ate my first winter orange today
It was tart
The rind outside is sharp
But I like the citrus scent underneath my fingernails

4.

I swallowed a grapefruit seed
And now my life has gone to pieces

5.

I went to italy
And came back
With a heavy heart
And mosquito bitten ankles

6.

Vallmo for miles
Red fields,
Abutt golden Rapeseed
for acres

A patchwork quilt I have loved and known

Home is where the windmills are

7.

Beach mother
Vagga mej till sömns
Av kroppen
Som mammas
Runda mjuka sanden
Under handduken
Vattnet som porlar

So much time for the ocean
So little water for the wildfires

8.

I am so tired
Of parents
That are tired
Of tantrums
That are childish

9.

Why is the skin of a plum so bitter?
And the flesh so sweet?
Dissociative personality disorder?
A natural castle wall and moat?

Florentine Shutters

The emerald city isn't in Oz
It's in Italy

My photo teacher,
He knows how to see

And he says,
Ochre is the color of this city

But, my friend
She says,

The city is green.

It is true
The shutters on my windows,
And yours

Are evergreen

Like foliage,
They adorn this treeless city

An attempt at the sublime
In this man made
Cement and stone

Metropolis

This city would like to imagine
That it could
Imitate the natural

At street level the city is blue asphalt
And yellow dust

But above the wrought-iron Ferri,
Tethering ghosts,
Florence is a long avenue of blue
Lined by green shutters

This city gets its chlorophyll from the wooden slats perched on our windowsills

Mary

“I need to tell you something I’ve never told you before, okay?”

I almost died at birth, seems like an oxymoron doesn’t it.

I found out today
That I might have a guardian angel in Mary
The divine feminine spirit

I was born and another man’s blood was injected into my bloodstream.
A machine breathed for me
Too eager to inhale the sweet, sweet air
I wound up with lungs full of blood.

When my Nana received the call
She was with “the tired contractor”, Bill
He dropped his tools and said, “don’t worry, I have a direct link with Mary”
And he went and prayed for me for two days.

He wasn’t alone,
Her friend Susan was, at that time, close with a priest
And his whole congregation prayed,
Calling upon Mary
To save me.

Papa says “I don’t know if it helped, but it didn’t hurt;
Prayer has energy”

Nana wanted me to know that I have this energy,
These spirits, watching over me.

When my Nana received the call,
She made a promise to Mary,
To whom she had never spoken,
That she would do something good for someone everyday.
She has kept this promise. In her practice
She recites mantras for the happiness, health and the well being of man
She prays for the world and the greater good.

Does that center my life in her practice?

This promise to Mary, she made for my fragile lungs, that she has kept all these years -
That is a form of magic

I haven't looked much outside of myself
Have built myself a tactile, tangible faith system.
It reinforces my heart, my homes, my dreams, my wishes;

An arkenstone,
That has, and hasn't, heard me
As I attempt to manifest safety
 health
 happiness
 love
 success
 strength

In my life, and for those whom I love.

This is a Hail Mary -
Repeated by millions around the world.
It is a part of the rosary, the wreath or garland of roses.
According to tradition,
Whenever it is recited,
Mary's head is crowned with a wreath of flowers in heaven.

"Hail Mary, full of grace
Blessed art thou among women,
And blessed is the fruit
Holy Mary, Mother,
Pray for us, now
and at the hour of our death.

Hail, holy Queen,
Mother of mercy,
Our life,
Our sweetness
Our hope.
To thee we cry, poor children of Eve.
To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.
Most gracious advocate show unto us the blessed fruit

O, O, O Mary! Pray for us, O holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises.”
A-women.

Madrid

Pigeons and parrots
In Retiro Park.

Monk parakeets fly overhead,
Their clefted tails silhouetted against the blue crystalline sky.

My dry roasted nuts from Kastrup are quickly disappearing.

A woman has lain down on the grass
In a parallel avenue of sun
With her whimpering dog.

It is Christmas in Spain today
Everything is closed
And everyone is taking a paseo in the park

The holidays are endless this year
Natale in Italy, Jul in Sweden, Three Kings in Spain
Christmas in New York

The sun feels hot on my forehead; therapeutic

On my right, the Palacio de Crystal is
Visible through the towering firs.

I have been sleeping late
Spending lazy hours in the park
Suntanning and watching the dogs, parrots and pigeons.
Anna is busy studying
And everything is closed anyway.

Bilbao

Tonight this city overwhelms me
Everyone and their niece and their dog are out.

The people in Bilbao have been rallying today,
Singing nationalist Basque songs in the street.
They are all wearing blue stickers,
Raising money for the ex-terrorist prisoners.

Crowds spill out of bars onto the red cobblestone streets
I'm nervous for my camera as I walk down the congested avenues and empty alleyways
Ashamed of the flash that flickers, before I push the shutter;
Shh baby, quiet.
Discreetly -
We capture this city
And its people.

I love all the gentlemen in their Basque hats.
David says they all used to wear them,
But no longer,
They've become associated with the farmers,
The "hicks",
The men in the stained glass mural at the train station;
Standing with their oxen,
Beside a coal spewing train.

In the quarters where the "Africans" live
Joyce says, "you don't hear a lot of Spanish in this area"
Separated from the old town by water, hills and a Calatrava bridge
That broke bones after it was unveiled

Calatrava hadn't taken into account
The bowl effect
The lips of the bowl reaching up on either side and the rain, running like milk down the middle
People broke their legs
On the wet glass.
They had to go back and fix that oversight.

Gour·mand

Grandpa likes menthol cough drops
And jolly ranchers,
Lollipops in ziplock bags,
Butterscotch candy in crinkly yellow luminescent wrappers.

And crabs;
Stone crab claws, "you take a claw and it grows one back",
And blue crabs that turn red in the pot
And stromboli made from the end bits of processed salty meats,
Sandwiched between greasy layers of cheese and bread.

He micromanages his world from a ridiculously oversized recliner,
And cooks: *plantains, hot dogs, cabbage, homemade sour pickles.*

They say the taste buds are the last to go.

Little Alyona

Little Alyona,
Russian chocolate
Girl.

Deserted
In Berlin

Little
Blue eyes
Stares up from the leaves,
Discarded
Amongst the magenta acorns

Alyonka's ruddy forehead
Is dusted
With peat, and a cyan color cast

Her soft, heavy
plum-p-ink cheeks
Weigh,
Into her wrinkled scarf

Displaced
Nesting doll,
Housed between white walls
That echo
Of dreams of theobroma

What is this Soviet girl doing in the dirt in Germany

The Einem chocolate fabrik,
The Red October,
Krasny Oktyabr factory,
Supplied confectionery to the court of the Tsar

Who did *you* serve Alyona?
Who are *you* really?

The daughter of a worker
Many women have claimed you.
That child,
With the ruddy cheeks and azure eyes.

The famous Alyonka,
The company denies -

Not a real girl.

Do I Contradict Myself?

Talk to me about your selves

Who are they?

How

Are they?

I don't trust those who camouflage

But who am I

To speak?

There is no *one*

Only multiplicities

And paradoxes

Are you comfortable,

Not making sense?

Sometimes I think my stability

Is unstable

I turn the same leaf over

So many times,

In every light, shadow, mirror

Turn to see myself

As I exhibit myself

As I *might* be

As *you* see me

Butter Your Own Bread, This is My Jam

I'm in my mf bag.

Frost creeps along the windowsill like mold and our carved pumpkins are rotting

It's brick, breadass.

The sky is a hazy shade of winter, the air tastes like smoke and I am melancholy

No funny.

I can feel the static building, everything electrifies, sparking at my fingertips

I am high key pressed.

The seasonal malaise is setting in, and my classrooms are still air conditioned

I low key just want to hibernate.

The sun sets at 4:40 today, campus lights will turn on at 3:31 and shine cold, blue light on the winding asphalt

Scorpio season is od suspect, and everything is in retrograde.

Ice is licking the brown, brittle leaves underfoot

No fake.

The wind is biting, I cry unwittingly

Yert.

This sorry millennial energy, maybe I should get a UV lamp for my dorm room

Sunlight is slept on, that shit hits.

Wake me when ~~september~~ winter ends, when the grass grows green again

That goes.

"The Laugh of the Medusa"

Beware the dangerous female seduction.

Medusa wasn't a villain.
She was a mortal, a celibate, and a rape victim.
Cursed by the asexual goddess Athena.

Her beauty caught the eye
Of the sea god
Who took her in the sacred temple of Athena.
The multimodal image of intoxication, petrification, and luring attractiveness.

Furious at the desecration of *her* temple,
Athena transformed Medusa into a woman,
A monster,
With genitals for hair
Whose gaze turned men to stone.

There is no universal truth to her myth.
Beautiful victim,
Monstrous villain,
Powerful deity—
She's all of those things, and more.

Cixous argues,
"If they dared to look at the Medusa straight on,
They would see that she is not deadly,
She's beautiful and she's laughing."

Catherine of Siena

I saw Saint Catherine's decapitated head today
And Saint Bernard's thumb

Three miracles happened at Catherine's funeral,
That's enough to make you a saint.

You just need three.

There is a fine line between the sexual and the spiritual,
Especially with ecstasies,
Orgasms of the soul.

Naples

Removed back to the streets of Firenze
 By a three hour train ride,
 I miss you

I missed you already from your pavement
 You are alive!
 Your soundscape
 And throbbing sidewalks
 Remind me of home.

Your grit and potential peril feel more comfortable to me
 Than Florence's innocence and stodgy pompousness.
 I feel safer in the Spanish quarter of Napoli at 1:00 am
 Than I do a block from my Florentine apartment at 10:30 pm
 How paradoxical is it that I am unphased by this lawless city.

Here people are Living!
 Loudly!

On Sunday we awoke,
 To more pastries
 And plums

To the docks we ran
 And got lost
 And ran somewhere else along the way

Passing the Castel dell'Ovo
 The seaside castle of the egg,
 On the peninsula of Megaride,
 The grave of the mermaid Parthenope

We bought round trip tickets from Beverello dock to Sorrento

The ferry ride reminded me of my trips to Staten Island with papa back in the day.
 Sitting on my knees with my hands against the window pane,
 As golden light lit my face and flooded the lower level of the boat

We claim a row of blue seats.
I wake up and see Sorrento,
Mountains and color

Steep stairs weave throughout the mountain face -
An Incarnation of paradise,
An unreal,
Lusciously green island
Adrift in the beautiful blue sea

No wonder Ligeia, Leucosia and Partenope,
The amorphous sirens took up residence here
Beckoning from the rocks of Cape Pelorus,
To sailors passing on the Tyrrhenian Sea

I Want All The Candles

It's cuffing season
And I'm cuffed
To someone an ocean away

Instead of watching tv
I send whatsapp messages into the void
And fall asleep

What about the cold is so lonely?
Is it the dark?
I need to tap into my Scandinavian roots,
Learn how to withstand this isolation.

Candles!
I want all the candles.

A heavy arm
On my chest
Would help me sleep

Our Bodies Are Quiet

Our pulses ricocheting
What is your pulse, what is mine?
Interwoven,
Interlocking,
The crux of our fingers
And the pillow of our palms

Our bodies are quiet

Don't leave your doors open,
You'll get dying bees in your house
I myself,
Have been cohabiting with a wasp

Social Media Centos:
Found Poetry, Haikus and Tankas

Yesterday I cried
Soft tears, and today I smile
And where there is space
For love, it will fill you up
Like a glass of milk

In California
Emotions are not the same
Here they are citrus
Peach to lime, sweet turns to sour
Old cars lose paint, sidewalks crack

Moments of total
Sleeplessness. Creased eyes stare
Unblinking at
The ridges of old paint on
The walls of my childhood room

These Santa Cruz trees
Invented the internet
Tall, mother networks

Popped fire hydrant.
The rain that breaks the heat wave.
I'm feeling magic.
A man on the L train had
A python around his neck.

A tree grows
 In Brooklyn and I,
 Am that tree

Yo don't come to NYC
 To chase ur dreams if u can't
 Walk fuckin fast son

Diary of a lady
 Landscaper, cat call me and
 I will crush your ego

Stop shrinking to fit
 Into places you've outgrown
 Bodega Barbie!
 New york misses your childhood,
 And everything has changed.

Runt Huset

Stjärnflocka, akleja
 Pion, iris, prästkrage
 Hundkex, daggkåpa
 Tänk att allt det vackra växer här. Runt huset.

Horse in Zebra's Clothes

Life is difficult
 And sometimes our stomachs feel funny
 But isn't it great!
 That we can lose and find
 Ourselves in ourselves and in each other
 That we can
 Change our patterns,
 Like a horse in zebra's clothes.

We Bleed Red

What if Danny watched the news and found out every black person was a crook or a robber?

You can't walk around with that kind of rhetoric.

That's just an *image* of a black person.

I don't consider myself any type of hood, I just consider myself a person.

People are ready to jump on you, for the color you are,

Not the journey you've been on.

Like real talk

It don't hold water.

The fact that we fuckin' bleed

Red when we are cut,

That's what connects us.

Carrara

In Carrara,
The marble is alive,
Veins run through the mountains

Ivory cliffs
Loom over the harbor,
Where the Magra River meets the Ligurian Sea
A site named after the moon goddess,
Who shines on the pearlescent slopes,
Selene, Luna, Diana

From the green waters of the Ligurian Sea,
The Apuan Alps rise
A landscape of craggy peaks covered in scrub brush, twisted trees, and marble deposits so white
They gleam as though cloaked with snow.

It was the marble of Carrara that converted Rome from a city of brick huts to one of white palaces.

The landscape,
The shape,
Of these mountains
Is changing

The face is slowly being hewn
Like half finished ziggurats
With Escher-like inverted ledges
And sheer drops and chambers
Entire peaks have been bisected.

Mario, a former stonecutter, told me
The winds in Colonnata have changed as well

Marble is the protagonist of these valleys

Portrait in my Head

The phone eats first
This is-ness of things,
A psycho gestural ballet

We're all culpable, it's very convenient not to look

Forgive me for staring,
I'm probably just making a portrait in my head

Every window is a possibility,
Every child a mermaid
Color, light and delicacy
A feast of texture

These images are a fairytale
They're not true
They're something I imagined

Portraits are abstractions
It is not her
It is of her,
It is not her

Light is a rhetorical device
The anima,
The soul of the image

Don't break the energy
Allow the moment to *bloom*,
To give birth

Its decorative, there's not much there that is yours
It needs the *thing* to happen

The image without the relationship

I was just trying to escape her eyes.

In Transit

There are moths in the subway

And Hopeless teenagers in the streets

There's something about listening to Panetoz
As the R train speeds along the tunnels,
Rocking from side to side

In the yellow light
On these orange seats,
With that train passing outside
With their white light
And blue seats.

The climate of the subway
A world within a world,
Stationary while everything else moves

The only indicators of the external world
Are puddles on train seats,
Snow on the stairs
The icy air projected by the AC
And condensation on the scratched plexiglass

The hot the cold the humid
The throng of people
The noise
The silence

Wanderers versus wonderers

The Runt

Grandpa has eyes like a pigeon.
They are dusty slate, with dark circumferences and electric white rings that crowd his tiny pupils.

His breathing is labored now,
There's too much feather dust in his lungs.
The birds would stir up sweet fetid clouds of dander when we entered the coop.
Now he trails an oxygen tank behind him, tethered to its incessant clicking.

He's had a strange attraction to beaked creatures
For 75 years he *homed* his pigeons
And shot at hawks.
Even Ringo's gone now,
The brown and white parakeet's tidy bowl-cut and ceaseless song just a memory.

Reigning monarch,
He has acted God over our 30 acres,
Deciding who gets to live, and who doesn't,
Subjugating nature in order to keep talons off his koi, and his pigeons wings soft and unruffled.

I remember the severed snake head,
Whose jaw continued to open and close after he had cleaved it off with a shovel,
And the white tailed deer with an arrow in its side,
Splayed across the back of his green four wheeler,
And the Kingfisher who's iridescent blue feathers shone from inside the rusty burning barrel.

Come fall, we'd feed the red eyed white rabbits in their elevated cages.
Come spring, Grandpa would put naked pink pigeons with their oversized beaks in our small gloved hands.
Come summer, we'd feed the koi off the dock, their soft scaled bodies brushing against our toes.

Grandpa hasn't lost his hustle, it still rustles and crunches green.
It's in the pillow he is stuffing for my Grandma,
As if financial security can replace a man.

Tech Men Talk

Theatre techies are crude
It's all curses,
And hyper masculinity.
Even amongst this species of underground, glasses wearing, keychain jangling nerdy men and women

Women trying emulate,
to be *one of the guys*
Language of mockery,
of danger,
of self deprecation.

They brag over the number of things that have fallen on their heads
"Once a wrench fell on my head while someone was on the big ladder,
That's why I'm the way I am"

I'm tired of these tech men.

"I don't want to call Ross, I'm not into dudes"

"Two sound guys - people at a light board"

"Just make sure the stage is clear, that John isn't on stage jerking off or anything"

"In other words, fuck off bub"

"Don't fear the tool"

"He's a toolbox"

"How's my penis? It's fine, you?"

"Tape measures are one of my greatest fears"

Somehow I Brought Rhode Island With Me

The thick and salty air still smells sweet.
The crickets still sound like summer.
The Grass still feels wet beneath legs.
I am not the same.

Pebbles roll along the ocean floor,
Mimicking the red and yellow buoys
That bob restlessly above on the rising tide.

The sand is stretched,
Rippled, by fresh water streams
That bleed into the Sakonnet strait.
The beach is laden with beach glass;
Every hue and shape tucked in between the rocks.

Haunt of the Wild Black Goose
East of the river's mouth, at the southern tip of the mainland peninsula
The water roils with striped bass
And I can hear the birds.

The 'I' Includes the Body

I was born at 1:32 am

I remember being closer to the ground

I remember reaching up to hold hands

Everything on the ground was in such detail

I would find the most delicate mushrooms behind my Nanas old cabin

She nicknamed me *eagle eye*

I remember the house from a different angle

Sometimes my perspective feels wrong

Just too tall

But, I am so young

The youngest I will ever be again

The oldest I have ever been

My Very Own Pillow.

Twitching to breathe
I remember claustrophobia

Touching the most important bodies in my life
Mama's fingertips combing through my hair
Or trailing my back

Papa's leg and arm draped over me, as he breathes deeply

I can be still
I was still

But the breath against backs
The heat
The covers
The limbs weighing, heavily

I want their love
But I can't always handle it.

Out I'd crawl
Back to my own bed
With the frightening dreams,
But my very own pillow.

Penumbra

It rained every single wednesday this summer
The old ladies and I knew to pack an umbrella
As soon as wednesday rolled around.

I ripped paper until my nail beds began to separate from the nail.
Cleaned trays until my skin was stained with platinum
Silvery specks embedded in the surface of my hand's
That remained
For a week or so -
Don't touch your eyes,
You could develop them.

Printed on pictorico
And stole food
It was good enough for government work.

Abbekås Båtklubb

Muddied salt water
Sloshes on the durk
Sandal tans and steering wheels

Wind
Waves
Blonde hair

Better than the stillness
When the båt just sits
And gups
Nauseating nothingness
Forearm resting on the kant
Wet fingertips

Little boys brave the ocean
Little girls want to prove themselves to bigger brothers

In This Space

I've never experienced a Richard Serra like this
I feel dizzy, disoriented,
Leaning, like I'm going to fall.
The spiral just keeps going.
The ellipse remains, but it contorts and twists and dances -
Like a canyon, and my center of balance is thrown off.

In *this* space. with its vaulted and waving ceilings
That curve, and undulate like vertebrae.

Serra and Gherri, a match made in heaven or hell.

I feel like Jonah
Inside the belly of a beautiful beast
Like those buttresses above are ribs and those windows are the surface of the ocean

The French man behind me whistled
And it echoed
Off the steel surfaces

Going out is easier than going in,
I know better what to expect.
I thought I liked the grease marks on the ones at Dia:Beacon,
Left by all the hands that run against the corten face
But I also like how unblemished these walls are
Marks that come from creation and from age, not left by humans

The pieces feel appropriate here
Memories of the shipyard,
And rusting storage containers,
That used to sit here.

Am I the sand in this hourglass?
I feel like I'm slipping after all
Never before has an art piece made me nauseous

I feel compressed

And swaying

Tort

Tort

Tort

Vecchiaia, Morte e L'Ospedale di Santa Maria Nuova

Do more people die in this city
 Than in others?
 Innocent,
 Non gang related deaths -
 This isn't a systemic oppression kind of thing.

Maybe I haven't seen any young Italians here
 Because there aren't any.
 Simply put, this city and its inhabitants are old.

Is that why the ambulances push -
 Their sirens piercing,
 Spitting blue light,
 In the early am, and late pm
 Because somewhere in this quilted city,
 Another old man fell onto the pavement?

Fell on his face
 And couldn't turn over

Perhaps this is why the Italians complain
 About the disorder.
 This disorder isn't just inconvenient,
 It's fatal.

This idyllic,
 pretty,
 prideful
 City is dangerous.

He fell slowly
 Exaggeratedly,
 Lagging motion.
 As he reached for his keys

His face descended into the intersection
Of pavement, concrete step, stucco wall, wooden door
The bridge of his glasses snapped
And sliced
The bridge of his nose
Skin
Dislodged
Dripping

I dislodged half of his glasses from under his shoe
And placed his keys in his hand

We asked the passersby,
'Do you speak Italian?'
They said
'Sì'
But didn't stop-

Didn't ask him to sit for a minute
Or call an *ambulanza*.

His eyes were unfocused
As he waveringly opened his door and walked inside
And slipped away

Seconds later the sidewalk had refilled,
With people who would never know.

Is this how the city lives?
In private?

I thought Venice would be a hard place to grow old,
But Florence too -
With her stairs,
Cold floors and stone walls,
Uneven, cobblestone streets,
Italiani ostili.

The oldest population in Europe
Is in decline.
Lying in hospital beds across the street from my apartment.

Snapchat streaks

Fed by updates on the tacky puddles of blood

Outside the hospital today.

With no rain to wash it away

Is That You Mrs. Sabo?

What a terror inspiring name
Sabo

She who lets you know
When a laptop has been stolen
A student hit in traffic
Or
Tied up in their home

I would hate to be her

Crime Alert
Safety Alert
Crime Alert Update
Crime Alert
Crime Alert
Crime Alert

All in the past two moons

I wonder what the difference is between a safety and a crime alert

Unknown individuals in your bedroom is considered a crime
Binding students while armed with a handgun is a crime
A student struck by a car is a safety alert

What about

Campus Alert

“an individual observed a man
(no further description available)
who exposed himself”

What is Vassar’s end-all solution?

“We have ordered new street lamps for greater visibility”
“Check your doors and windows”

Hide your kids, hide your wife, and hide your husband

The Last Bufalino

Four days ago great uncle Tommy died.
Nana's voice sounded broken and hollow on the phone.
The last Bufalino -
Hold your screws Brenny,
It's going to be okay
I will miss Tom's great, booming laugh
The way his face folded when he bellowed
How happy he was
To get to know us
How obvious his love for his sister was
How much he admired her even though
He didn't entirely understand her
Before the illness his and energy was contagious.
That was the first time he came up the mountain
The second time he was thinner
His eyes were tired,
They didn't sparkle like before
There was fear in them.
He was a kind man
But he was overly humble,
He didn't have faith in his own worth -
And didn't want people to see him
Suffer.
He didn't want to be commemorated.
But how could that be?
Perhaps he didn't know how to ask for it.
He spent his life fighting the good fight, providing for
And loving his family.
Poor Nana,
She will miss him
Miss knowing that he is on this planet too

It's Raining in Cinque Terre

The big waves are coming in
But not like yesterday.
Yesterday, the water roiled
With wind driven waves
That crashed into the sand
And stone
Water above
Water below

1.

Trinity

I said -

“I understand why being part of an organized religion would bring comfort, you can go anywhere in the world and the churches all smell the same.”

Kathryn said -

“They don’t smell the same to believers.”

2.

Helen points out the window
Chiesa Dell’Autostrada in passing

Church of the Freeway

A church for the people of the highway
As they travel
Towards the *high* way

A roadside attraction
Ought to slow motorists

The problem is convincing drivers to stop

Not for physical

Rest

But for spiritual

Uplifting

You’ll see the highway church as you’re driving down the A11
But,
With speed limits now 130 kilometers an hour,
it’s difficult to slow down
and look

“I wonder if you look both ways when you cross my mind (Jesus)” - Tyler the Creator

3.

I wrecked my ankles and feet again today
in the name of art

Helen led us to,
 through,
 and from
 Ravenna

My camera roll is inundated with early christian architecture

I found
A heterogeneity I did not expect there

Unity
is the true outlier

And I always thought asymmetry was immoral -

Each Corinthian carved by different hands
Every second column a spoil

A cycle of rebirth,
From one church, another is born

The marble whispers disjointedly of past cathedrals and foreign lands

Judy Says

Photography is always about loss and regret
She says,
When you put two photographs together,
there is always an implied third

The depth of chlorine
The residue on the body
Adhered to the skin
Photography as a trace, what remains

Abstracting from what?
Do I mean reductiveness,
Not burdened by narrative?

Slipping into the meta
Photos about poems
Poems about photos

Photography, is the medium of the underdog
The individual who'd rather carry their own leash
The creature hungering for representation,
And identification,
of self and of the world.

Photography's desire to 'salvage' is (almost) carnal,
An art so set in time
Intrinsically linked to my mortal fear of loss

When I photograph people, I already miss them

Fear of the erasure of images,
Memories,
Vision,
Impressions,
Of my, your, this, world.

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