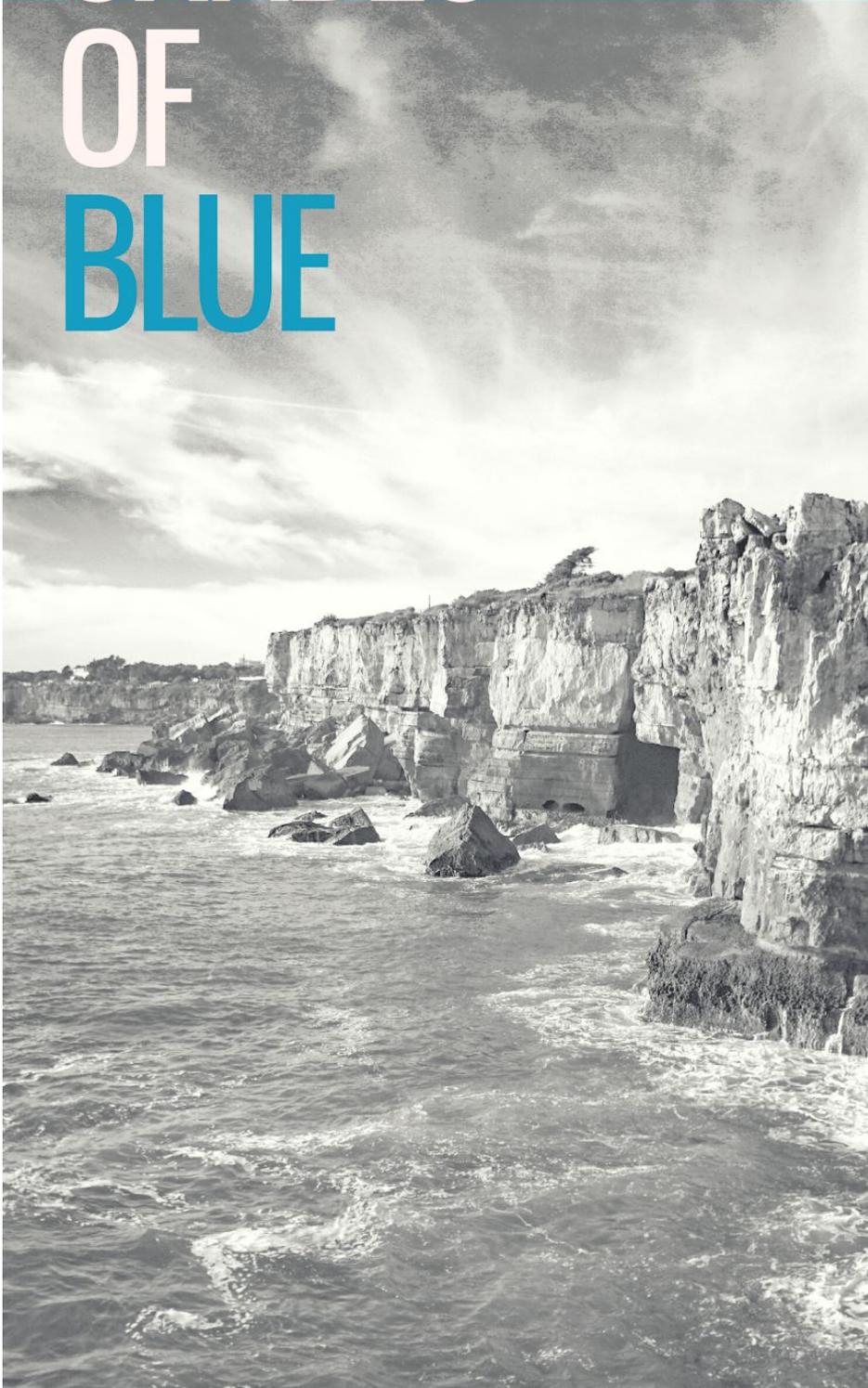


SHADES

ON MOMENTS

OF  
BLUE



COCO BOYLE

SHADES OF BLUE  
A COLLECTION OF POEMS ON MOMENTS

COCO BOYLE

*To my family, always. Devon, too.*

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# Hatstand

Writing under a hatstand  
the flapper headband glistens with pearls  
dripping with the decadence and heat of the twenties  
next to it the porkpie of the forties  
glaringly different in its dull felt lastingness  
the cane, hung on a hook, the odd man out, swings lustily in the seabreeze  
coming in from the open door of the museum cafe  
and i wonder if they are real  
if they have sat atop heads and brows  
seen bohemian parties and chaotic streets  
teeming with people long gone  
bored now in their disuses  
only watching the diners in the cafe  
moaning over the slowness of the wifi  
i would like to wear many hats  
as the expression goes  
become vitruvian in my abilities  
how renaissance would that be  
slip from one existence to another  
shedding decades  
like feathers from the flapper crown  
or beading from the sailors hat  
that must have whipped across the waves  
and been over heads that yelled from riggings  
and other activities that happen in topsails  
or mainstays  
there's only so far pirate movies can get you  
but the black mourning hat might suit me best  
wearing a widow's downturned grace  
smiling generously as people minister to me  
clasping my somber white hand  
elegant ring a reminder of my great loss  
and i cry serenely over the grave of my dead husband  
like a fallen angel in my lumosity  
the sorrow only reinforcing my quiet beauty  
held in restraint behind the soft netting and raven's feathers of the hat  
a great man they would all assure me  
as my strong sons stand beside me  
like a Turner portrait  
holding in their sorrows with solemnity

and sharing the same aquiline nose as their father  
with whom i most certainly would have fallen hopelessly for  
when we locked glances across a crowded Parisian boulevard  
anchoring each other with the fury and tantalizing heat of our conjoined gaze  
yes the forgotten imaginary remembered love  
those are the sweetest i think  
as i cry softly, though beautifully, I am sure  
over my mochacino in the museum cafe  
to the improvised funeral dirge of benny and the jets played by idle tourists  
for my nonexistent dead husband  
beneath the inadvertent monument of the hatstand.

# Ode to the unseen overheard sigher

San Telmo

You decaying enigma

Plant spout from ancient balustrades and other baroque decoration

Peeling pavement

Jagged cobblestones make walking on broken feet all the harder

But it is the windows that make me pause

One window from my forward view

Had a red painted pane

And from it issued the most melancholy sigh

I have probably ever heard

Figuratively

Literally

Probably

Unseen sighers

From repainted windows

And most likely dark rooms

And most likely tortured souls

And most likely a famous artists

Lamenting lost loves

And more likely the ghost of a famous artist with a tortured soul lamenting their lost love

How would I know

I never looked back

# The Demonstration

I am sure there is a demonstration somewhere  
i can hear the drums and whistles  
common to that marshaling beast  
the thousand headed demonstrator  
a mentality of throats ringing  
in a language i can't quite make out  
it could be the distance  
or the language barrier  
but they are clearly emphatic about something  
under the seaside sun their are lost in the winding streets of Valparaiso  
i can hear the honk of cars  
and the answering voices of the people  
they are certainly demonstrating something  
emotion directed down the crowded streets  
feet stomping through the low clinging fog  
and dogshit covered sidewalks where the vendors look on  
from behind their meat and vegetables  
perhaps they are the same demonstrators i saw yesterday  
marching inside their police cordoned routes  
the same ones who took over a confused concert in the park  
musicians holding cellos awkwardly as they had the largest audience  
for their silent work  
instead of the business people who never looked up  
a rapt audience spellbound by the emphatic man  
spitting in spanish into their carefully tuned microphones  
banners by their sides in confusion  
violins clutched to chins, bows askew  
the triangle player sidling embarrassingly down the stairs  
the traffic of the city halted by the deviation of route  
a cataclysmic apoplexy of the cities arteries  
perhaps they have been marching all night this motivated mob  
past the bars where chilenos stood captivated by the aerobics of the national futbol teams victory  
over uruguay eyes glued to televisions  
shifting cars from their allotted places  
drawn on by the spell of the man in the black winter coat and curly hair  
arms gesturing to the singsong of his voice

perfecting conducting the people before him  
far more skillfully than the conductor  
who stood shoved off to the side of the stage  
his baton limp on confusion  
uselessly held under his arm  
it almost sounds like a song from here  
words i can't understand  
me perched in my safe balcony of the cafe  
watching the ships come into shore  
and the glint of cars on the highway across the bay  
far above the concerns of the far off potential masses  
who may or may not have walked all night  
for something that probably is important  
probably an incarnation of the slogans i've been seeing painted on the walls of buildings  
peeping from behind innocuous graffiti  
but i lacked the cultural lens to focus and see  
being captivated instead by the ten tentacled octopus with the tuxedo'ed mermaid face.  
even now the restaurant has sneakily put on loud vaguely latin music  
to drown out the awkwardly loud and pointed cries of the people  
i am resigned to my fate as a tourist  
and inability to understand what is truly here  
watching waiters slowly turning up the music  
as the hypothetical feet and drums draw closer  
a socio-economic static  
so that the voices become white noise  
blending seamlessly with the hollow echo of cargo being unloaded in the industrial side of town  
and gaudy cries of the gulls.

## The old men of San Telmo

You old charmers have my young heart  
You do, its true your roguish bastards  
Don't try and play coy with your wrinkled faces  
That rasp old the deep italian spanish  
Those cheeky tweed jackets and shepherds caps  
Worn at the edges, pulled down over smile wrinkled eyes  
Respectively  
Don't pretend you don't know you're simply delightful  
When you pull me into a slow tango  
At 2am on the dimly lit floor of La Casa del Sr. Duncan  
Old hands trembling slightly as they take mine  
But feet sure of the dance  
The chaotic steps across a plaza crowded with slow descending couples  
Your eyes closed, wrinkled from the years  
Humming to the baseline of the electric guitar  
Thrumming like the stand up base balanced by the fading red velvet  
Dancing the same steps you probably did with the metaphorical her  
All those years ago  
When you were a young charmer  
When the shepherds cap fitted over wayward black curls  
And those same twinkling eyes  
I'll be her for tonight  
Because I think I've fallen in love with all of you  
Each time  
I think I've fallen in love with the memory of all of you  
Slowly dancing across dimly lit dance floors of San Telmo.

# The Reason for Sundays

The reasons for Sundays  
must be  
to have a cup of tea and write  
why else would they be so perfectly positioned between  
the chaotic bubbleandsqueak of Saturdays  
and the cubicle walled timetable of Monday.  
It is a little known though widely followed principle  
seen in streams of families and walkers  
strolling down sidewalks to cafes and diners  
hats and dogs and children in hand  
under the sun and cloudless california sky.  
Though not all write  
all give the writer occasion to.  
How else would I be sitting in this café writing about them  
with their hats and dogs and children?  
You see,  
in this circular poetic logic  
Sundays have to exist for me  
and my cup of tea  
earl grey with lemon (if you must)  
or else  
like the tiny girl-child with the curly braid, pink, pink bows  
and too large cup of hot chocolate next to me sings  
we all fall down.

# Valpo

Today I sit  
overlooking the city  
writing like Pablo Neruda  
Valparaiso spread before me  
but I do not have his eyes  
like the street art says  
who invited you to live in my city  
quien te invites vivir en mi ciudad  
dripping red from spray cans  
I do not know  
who invited me to live in the  
winding alleys and cobblestoned streets  
houses made of ships sides  
covered in the anger and channeled fury  
of youth  
sidewalks covered in stolen moments and dog shit  
two stories up  
not four like his house  
i sit  
drinking a macchiato  
in an empty restaurant  
filled only with the waiters idle conversation  
and the ceaseless calls of the gulls  
sitting on houses decaying in the sea mist  
soy extranjero  
i am in the tourist district alone  
no hay turistas ahora  
the chilean flag hangs loosely on its pole  
faded like his dream  
red not blood red  
blue not sea blue  
white not bone white  
the colonial lampposts are confusing luminaries beneath it  
the port is the same as the city  
the screech of the crane's arm in the shipyard  
the same as the cry of the fruit vender

I have no love to inspire me  
the waiter is not Matilde  
the restaurant is not Capri  
no two doves whom i search for with my hands  
only a city spread out before me  
an empty restaurant  
and a macchiato.

# West

I once always knew where West was  
an unerring certitude of where the sun set over the water  
i was like a lichen  
growing larger and encompassing everything always in that same direction  
even in the Himalayas it drew me over their snowy tops  
past the people and tea that took me in  
and called me their own  
who mixed unconditional kindness into their rice and dal  
the knowledge that West existed  
that there was a place where the sun set over the waters  
there was no ties of blood  
no place where the grapes were the blood of the land  
and we clashed with fire and fury a vengeance of history  
West was where there was a bowl full of sunlit oranges  
and a door I could walk through always  
there was an ocean bobbing with people who had lost the sensation of the ground beneath their  
feet  
and any other direction other than towards the sea  
a place of privilege that we choose to pretend doesn't exist  
the complex webs of the world supporting its paradise  
the sweat and small deaths that let our eyes be full of the sea and nothing else  
but now in a place where the sun sets in the east  
and people chant in the streets  
in a language i almost understand  
I have lost the compass of my youth  
no more can i find the way west  
i am a blind bird  
held down only by gravity  
who has to choose now a direction  
tossed amid the schooling swarms of people who go  
right left and everywhere  
talking in words that are symbols  
if only i choose to understand  
that West is not everywhere, not even in me  
and the compass is a device that can be  
shattered by streets that go nowhere and have no name.

# Blue

I am constantly being surprised by all the blues in the world  
one color (collective) played out in a rather puritanical wavelength  
490-450 nanometers  
the small frequency is a lifetime in discovering.  
just this morning i noticed the shade of blue the sun makes as it casts the ocean reefs into relief  
against the sand  
but this exact shade can only be glimpsed from the clifftop  
while exiting a minivan  
with your hands full of oily, unpredictable mountain bike and backpack  
all at once  
the uncertainty and imbalance, struck all the more into the surprising blueness of it  
I could list several more blues off the top of my head, and from horizontal in bed:  
Cornflower, butterfly, sky, berry, periwinkle, azure, hyacinth, baby  
but they all seem limp and blurred  
I crave specificity and more importantly, relevance  
to me, ME and only me  
what IF my cornflowers here in San Diego grow a lighter shade of blue because of the acidity.  
what IF my butterflies are pipevine swallowtails and yours blue morphos?  
my god, what a disparity in phenotype and furthermore  
even if you asked, I would not let you have them  
all my blues, I have collected them carefully  
not in jars, too confining  
not with pins, too horrible  
but in notebooks, to be burnt upon my death  
turned into that final blue which stays closest to the heart of a fire  
the one which always seems to have a face, dangerous.

# Gliderport

The lack of ocean in my life is appalling  
The nearness of it is intoxicating  
But much like the glistening diamond cut liquor bottles on the shelves behind bars  
It gathers dust  
Dormant  
Bottled  
Stopped up behind my windshield, after the alarm clicks twice and I turn my back riding my  
bicycle two miles inland to work  
It has become simply a color  
The same color  
The same shape and heft  
An inch long line the wraps the horizon  
Exactly the same length as the 101  
Because if for a moment  
The slightest recognition of its immensity and proximity  
The gush and smash of the water against the reef  
The wildness of the salt on shore  
The cries of gulls wheeling above  
The heat of stinking kelp washed on shore  
The burn of rocks against feet  
The cut out lumps from runners  
The blind of wavetops in the sun  
The sickening green of froth left behind  
The pocks of storms past on cliffs  
The grain of sand against feet  
The time accumulated in the smallness of the sand grains  
The stretch of horizon  
The cliffs poised ready to break in sandstone rivulets, leaden cataracts  
The freshness of newly fallen sandstone blocks  
Crushed against the grey of the sand  
The mix of red and alarming grey  
The flecks of gold  
The small plastics like tragic confetti  
The tiny castanets of crab feet  
The slick of their mouth pincers mashing against exposed pools  
The slurp of sea urchins against fingers  
The flash of a tentacle as an octopus hides in the fleshy kelp  
If for the briefest of moments...  
I would never work again.

# Sunset

The sun has set again, bastard  
Setting into motion a frantic scramble against the slipping of my life  
My feet scabble against the tipping earth as it rears up and tries to shake me into night  
Into sleep  
Into oblivion  
And that, is unacceptable  
I'll never sleep again.  
Why should i?  
The moon is a witch  
The sun is already dying  
Only a million years left  
And by god, I've got things to do  
Like eat pomegranates in the summer bursting against my teeth and staining borrowed white  
linen shirts  
Ripping open packages, tearing and throwing the addresses aside and gathering things around me  
like armor  
I've got a thousand statues to carve, granite crumbling around my feet while my hands rave like  
alcoholics  
Books to write  
Facts to cram into my head, sticking between the grey myelinegious matter like post-its  
Pages and pages, flipping like city pigeons taking flight  
I'm simply swamped, so sleep is off the agenda for sure this time  
I'll just watch the sky paint itself bluer and bluer until I can't make out the differences in blues  
and the light has fled into the range we call black, the absence of everything except light  
pollution screaming over the horizon burning the bottom orange  
And make lists of things to do  
Because the world in its infinite madness has decided to sleep  
The only sane thing left in this night are bats and criminals  
Both filled with a hunger a million mosquitoes can never fill  
So we'll all sit and stare and wait, and the lucky ones will keep flying, never satisfied  
The lucky ones will creep hands full and bloody  
And I'll sit in stillness until my mind pulls itself apart below in complete darkness  
Like dark stars  
Eyelids burned open.

## Young Adult (Houseplants)

I measure time in leaves now  
A month for the Monstera  
Stolen from a beachside yard in Encinitas, beneath a salt bleached fence and drooping ferns  
A week for the spider  
Variegated blades and spiderettes shooting like fireworks from the pot  
Dug from my grandfather's backyard and toted in the back of a Subaru back to my apartment  
A couple of days for my black Taro  
Given to me by a partner, carefully picked out from among the other, ruby stem and deep jade leaves fanning and thrusting upwards in a stellation of tropical hearts  
Times passes in the spritz of the watering can, my tiny rainstorms I make on the way to work  
Time passes in the tiny fertilizer spears I bury, furling upwards in clusters  
Time passes in spiked dracaena leaves tipped with red  
It wanders in the seeking tendrils of ivy, binding objects with hunger  
And drips in the prongs of the Spanish moss, dropped from a family friend's archway  
And spills in goblets of string of pearls, hung next to my bookshelf, beading up in translucent clusters on Poe and Melville  
But the most agonizing is the Old Man of the Andes, a small shaggy cactus I have had since a small girl, pot carefully picked out in blues that sparked my juvenile imagination, what I dreamed the peruvian night sky looked like, small gray stones adorning the base to match, whom after all these years, I cannot tell whether the small white tuft covering the occasional spikes of its leaning bulk has moved at all.

## Afternoons in Idy

Listening to the sounds of lives ricocheting past over wooden tables  
There must be accumulated centuries of time happening here  
The young bubbling with the first taste of caffeine and short shorts  
The weary hikers saying nothing at all buried in a leather chair  
The largest table occupied by several seniors citizens talking of nothing but memorials and death  
One friend then another  
Flying past in monotone baritone  
With a slight midwest twang  
A young couple across blooming with the fist hints of love  
Affection creeping through his swirling tattoos and her barefoot feet curled round each other  
Nervous  
But leaning into the headwind of possibility, one hair touch at a time  
In between the languorous glimmers of Tash Sultanas guitar  
At the counters the baristas flood the crowds with sugar and caffeine  
A chemical shield against the oppressive heat of the day  
Which lays across the mountain in a titan's glare  
And the tourists burst in one by one fanning themselves in more outlandish costumes  
One after another  
This one a tribal print fanny pack  
The next a full polka dotted romper  
Another with glasses so large his face is completely obscured for the glint of glass and a tiny  
braid down the center of his back  
Buffalo shirted white shorted  
One pattern a whirlpool of jeweled colors, spreads wide across a grandmothers back, a school of  
abstract fish, or a susurrantion of swallows, either way I'm transfixed further and further down  
into the small of her back and the hand that leans heavily on a wooden cane, other holding an  
overeager progeny from crawling over the counter in a pre-sugar frenzy one small itchy hand at a  
time  
Polo'd and racerbacked, striped and giraffed, earth tones and neon, all wait at the counter  
patiently  
Pushing strollers with wide eyed children blinking sleepily against summers drowsy touch  
Some walk up to the counter, another in a patterned sweater with the sleeves pushed up hangs  
back uncertain, defeated by the chalked options ahead  
Another couple blooms in the corner  
Sitting next to each other, heat streaking up their touching legs,  
Not making eye contact

His earring glints slowly a shape I can't make out  
Like a lightning bolt  
Or eagle feather  
Both ephemeral like the heat that floods in from this latest wave of shade seekers  
All thirsty for more.  
The sounds of a harmonica drift in  
Unclear if they are part of the music or the afternoon itself  
The young couple has returned as they play nervously with their waterbottles  
But their smiles say I love you  
The studied indifference a tension incalculable in the small distance  
I long for a time when life was that full of feeling  
That electric  
Even if they only talk of school friends and tv shows  
They could power a town with their light.  
Yet still I am puzzled by the table in front of me, glass topped, exposed wires, gleaming lights  
and transistors and labeled switch, even a couple of magnets resplendent in their galvanized  
steel. It's sides and mirrored and top uneven, purpose unclear. I would assume-- as my italian  
soda housed in a water bottle slowly sweats on top  
-art  
They have moved again, their third table within the hour.  
I am still here waiting for the afternoon to fade, the heat to cease, night to fall,  
Waiting at the small couch  
With my shoes off  
Thirsty.

# Assholes

The New York Times published an article today on the scientific purpose of horse snorts

They might be assholes

A researcher canvassed 300 horses recording the snorts and purpose of the snorts

The conclusion being sometimes a horse snorts in fear

Sometimes a horse snorts in happiness

Sometimes a horse snorts because it has been eating longer stemmed grass

They might be assholes

But even assholes who have spent any time around living breathing horses

Knows a fear snort from a happy snort

Otherwise said asshole will get the snort kicked out of him

By the horse

Who has many snorts.

# Bees

In the alpine meadow  
Spring now rampant in purples and furze green  
Sharp cocoons of juniper and pine boughs kneeling under the weight of pregnant cones  
The carpenter bees are busy  
Mapping each flower with a few second of time  
Heavy black fur thick upon their bulbous heads  
Made ridiculous by their singularity of purpose  
Wings hefting aloft, questing legs, grasping the petals  
Dusted with the golden pollen  
Dipping and pausing as if in relief in the cone of each flower  
Jet bead eyes hungry  
The collective roar of the dispersed hive, deafening  
With a smaller change of tune they suck the nectar  
Muted, softer, a hum of praise  
Then, quick! To the next  
And I heavy, loud, sunning on the rock above wait for the next  
Bee, the next bush  
All the while  
The clouds rush like galleons  
And the rocks stare unchanged  
While I do nothing at all but listen to the sound of bees.

# Carwash

There is a simple pleasure in car washing  
The summer sun hot on your back  
Belly arching back from the burning red of the car hood  
The swift bursts of the hose against the car body creating suburban rainbows and small waterfalls  
For a moment I am a god  
Creating miracles where before there was only inert metal  
I am a god peering through time from my loft heights  
I move to the hood and soap the curved shell, digging out the caked beetles and butterfly debris  
Left behind from a small genocide  
The migration got in the the way of my weekend trip  
And this this small yellow blood is on my hands  
Caked to my grill  
The pocks from rocks spluttered up from the road and shot from passing car wheels  
Stings me as I wash over their cratered surface  
Not too long ago, this car was whole and gleaming  
My first car  
I bought now, with my money  
A pleasure I can say now. The hours of science and statistics transfigured into thrumming  
horsepower and belching carbon exhalations  
Named Eric  
Whom I love  
Even as I hate the action  
A convenient doublethink for a data spectator  
My small dog runs around my legs, barking at the gushes and chasing the soap bubbles down the  
driveway drain  
As I remember I once used to watch my father from my small vantage point  
With a different dog  
On a different day  
With a different car  
While my mother, lost in the jungles of our garden with a shovel and machete in hand, tamed the  
land  
And gloried in the same transformative power of soap.  
I hope there will be more June days, with sun and soap and cars  
And my small children with more small dogs  
As this world fades like the afternoon into evening  
But the worry tugs at me, is this car the reason that future cannot exist

Or perhaps it is me  
It must be  
What sin can inert metal have  
It is the driver, the washer  
For however hard I scrub  
The world will keep burning.  
Then I am back to waxing  
Buffing again and again  
The yellow carnauba leeching through the soft sponge between my fingers  
A manifestation of force  
Better than any physics textbook  
Like the first human stepping forth from their muddy shell  
I have fashioned a new car from old, wiping the wax off towel stroke by towel stroke  
I have wiped my worries away through my convenient, mundane, oblivious humanity  
As I enumerate the virtues of camping tables  
To my sister  
Who sits in the corner  
Politely  
Not listening, but enjoying the silent virtues of my camping chair.

## In between

How come there ain't no poems bout the in between  
The times you feel perfectly all right  
Not waiting at all  
Just happily, yourself.  
Balanced  
Whole  
Humming along neither up nor down  
Just perfectly  
Silently yourself.  
The mellow shallows on contentment are a foreign soil  
And one dearly grasped by my drowning hands  
Often sighted from the stern  
Rarely splashed in by my too hot feet.  
Here, is where I should be,  
Here's to just being obscenely and utterly okay.

## Kat's

From where I curl on the couch  
Warm in her fleece  
I can hear the faint footsteps of Kat  
the sound of running water from upstairs  
The apples gleam softly on the counter from where she  
Tumbled them out  
Talking her river of thoughts over the bounces  
Placing them in a heap  
after being tucked away so neatly in the grocery box  
On the back of her scooter  
A worry fills me  
tightening in a loop  
But  
Then I hear the water is running upstairs  
And see the apples are spilled on the counter  
Not the road where their  
Bright skins and pale flesh crushed to juice and granular pulp  
under some careless motorist's wheels who was glancing down at their phone and not at the most  
important thing of all  
but  
there are still faint footsteps upstairs.

# My darling

I am sitting here thinking of you  
My future child  
While the listerine burns my tongue  
Just for a brief moment  
What you will be like  
As I gurgle and fizz, chasing rats from behind the refrigerator with a broom  
Mouth still full  
And head still full of you  
Your dark hair  
Curly like mine  
And brain bright and daring  
A young hawk on the wing  
Or perhaps grizzled and shy, old before your time  
A bear curling up for winter  
Either way  
I am sure you will surprise me  
And throw all my expectations right out the window  
With one tiny  
But powerful arm  
--Nothing that comes from me could be anything less  
The dishwasher clinks some glasses together and through the rush  
Of swirling water  
I wonder who your father will be  
I suppose it doesn't matter  
To me at least  
Or it could make all the difference in the world  
He could be a sailor, or a pirate, or a king  
As I will read to you over the first poem I wrote for you  
Never the last, my darling  
We shall see, won't we both, we shall see  
Cross the years, cross the space, you will always be my darling bee  
And I have loved you before you even began  
Just now  
In my thoughts  
The beauty of my being here  
Both feet in my young twenties

Mouth full of listerine  
And future full of you  
Means that this speculation is but a beautiful minty breeze  
I rinse and spit,  
And think of you, my darling.  
For now I am young and you are not yet begun  
We shall see, my darling, we shall see.

[The smell of basil hot in the summer  
The taste of mint on my tongue  
The scurry and scamper of rats feasting upon the crumbs.  
This is your start, and my heart overflows.]

# Out!

How can I be practical when there is an entire world out there

Out just before that door there!

Go!

It would be the work of a moment to push it open

See how it shines and gleams

That elusive horizon

Beyond it

Beyond...

*Beyond*

*A turn of the knob, a push of the frame*

*And the wind would hit you*

*Arctic and frigid, brisk with a salt tang*

*Or hot with the perfume of an endless forest dripping with lianas and danger*

*Just beyond*

*Beyond the door*

*Do you go*

*do you dare?*

*Retirements and 40 hour work weeks*

*All good all great all so very practical*

*But the door*

*The door is there*

*The sun is bright*

*The wind is deafening*

*And I can taste it*

*The promise, the beyond*

*I'm done with window views*

*I need heights and scents*

*I need to go beyond*

*The sitting has creased my soul into a permanent backache*

*The waiting is responsible as lead*

*Dependable*

*Dependable*

*Deplorable*

*Necessary!*

*But then so is death*

*That too comes with waiting*

*And sleep and darkness  
And the door is just there  
So turn it  
Go beyond!  
I have eaten other people stories  
The lotus thick on my breath  
I have accumulated all that I have been told  
So responsible am I  
So responsible so alone  
And sitting  
The typing roars the clacks rise to a shriek  
And I go deaf  
The meeting passes with mouthed words  
Wide mouths and problems solved goals accomplished  
And from the center of the buzzing silence the door looms  
There is always a door, in the corner, darkly lit. Shut.  
But all it would take is a small step  
Then another  
Until I was running full speed  
Out of here  
Here is intolerable and responsible  
Here is  
Here is fine  
Here is  
Here is safe  
Here is grey and polyester  
But beyond  
I shake and shiver at the beyond  
I fall towards it with a gravity.  
Beyond. Death waits for us all.  
I run and fall.  
The door opens.*

# Patios

From my comfortable perch on the patio couch  
The afternoon light is electrifying  
and many faceted  
It burns around the pomegranate  
illuminating the petite ovals from behind like a madonna  
It seems paler and harsher on the rose  
Who has fallen from summers embrace with wilting leaves and brown petals blown gently in the  
wind  
That touches the pumpkins  
Freshly harvested from the garden  
It shines gentler there  
Glowing over the waxy surface  
The pale orange of the cinderellas, leaning on the metal table with stately grace and regular  
symmetrical grooves and curves, the squat but deeper red of the kansases, intricate dapples of  
white and deep range being burnished more copper in the sun, growing more autumnal with  
every moment that passes  
But I think my favorite light is the metallic one  
Almost silver off the wooden shingles on the shed  
Throwing the ancient shingles into relief, jagged edges and irregular warps of each one  
Crinkling the lines like granite  
A collection of glacial ridges in our suburban yard  
Above the shed that has been dreamed to be many things through my twenty years here  
Yet still remains just a shed  
Filled with moldering lawn care items and fertilizers  
Shining gently in the afternoon light.  
I feel in this light  
Just another thing to be brightened and lightened and reflected  
Lazing here  
As so many summers before  
And summers to come  
Not as stunning as the pomegranate  
To be that vibrant would be to burst  
I dare not dream that big  
But fuller then the rose  
My life still waits somewhere beyond this couch and light and garden  
Jagged and warped and beautiful as our aging roof that has the audacity to shimmer at 5pm.

# Shuhhhh

when love has faded it's like

*no that's...*

when love has faded-

*scribble scribble*

when-

it's just that you and me have

well it's just that you

*that can't be it at all*

why can't it go back to the ways things were

but it can't now

you're just

and I'm just

we're just

two people

next to each other

sitting in silence

there were days when we didn't sleep til midnight for just talking

about waves and mountains and chocolate

not that the words mattered

not that the sound of your voice mattered

it was the nearness, it was closing the gap between you and me

when time tiptoed around the confines of your bed, just the two of us, tangled in sheets and drinking tea

but now

it's just

us, sitting in silence

there were nights when sleep was just a prelude to morning and your hands on my body and mine on your lips

and now it's just us, sitting in silence

I'm just ready to be just me

sitting in silence.

That's just how it goes sometimes,

just how it goes.

## Southwest Flight 314 from San Diego

I don't know why I limit myself with lack of...  
lack of—  
limit my—  
all my *self* is dammed behind fear  
of some solid impenetrable thing that lodges in my chest  
I know the dimensions of it  
I can feel it stiff and bulky beneath my collarbones  
in this airplane seat which does not recline,  
(not cruising altitude) it pokes out and *today* is rectangular, surprisingly thin *and* absolutely  
immoveable  
stuck like the panel of a cardboard box  
that must be stripped, clinging in glistening, torn fibers, individually  
to compress the unused shell to a single plane  
how irritating and loud  
and so I bury myself in indecision and headphones to try and slosh myself over it instead  
far easier  
I find myself using the word *myself* a lot though  
it is a tattered, wispy thing that smells faintly of sweat  
above me the airline attendant gives lifesaving directions with droning electronic stiffness  
I don't care  
I am too busy raving over the grids of this notebook  
I always write on graph paper  
because the futility of containing all of the mind-gesturings and hand-eye coordinates of ink and  
insanity make me chuckle  
but then  
I have to work tomorrow  
so perhaps the chuckles will stay dammed behind my enameled, plastic'd, aching teeth  
the plane pulls back over the tarmac, away from the terminal  
the condensation glitters on the wing  
under the yellow of the runway lights  
and blue of the wing  
the drops that run down the promiscuous swell looks like canyons seen from heights  
but they are only wings seen from grounds  
now the cabin light dims  
--I wish I would as well--would that it were that easy  
though my pen and heart keep racing  
independent of fear, that could be treated with a pill or some deep breaths  
I race and rave *now* simply because of brain chemistry  
there is a pill for that as well  
even if I don't want to take that one  
with such a pretty name  
lithium

though the word seems like taking it would power you  
the conductivity of lithium so wonderfully high  
the capacity of storage financially high  
yet orally, dulls  
if it were all to stop  
or even slow  
like molecules in a vacuum  
it would be easier  
like falling asleep in frost  
it would all be far easier  
like a child's sudoku  
four small squares  
neatly filled in  
with pen  
and it's over  
cause of death: sudoku  
12  
34.

## Slightly later in flight 314 from San Diego

I don't want to go this time.  
Outside the plane window  
through the scratches and evaporated dust droplets  
the lights on the wingtips flash furiously  
the highway draws closer and the adjacent street lights blur together at the edges  
the plane hops over it one leg at a time  
lifting gently  
and leaving my heart in the tarmac behind us  
clinging by bloodless fingertips to the clamped terminal doors  
I hold my breath and 3,2, *hoomph* we've crossed my rooftop  
where I now could be under, naked, sweating slightly in the summer night  
over my duvet next to a book  
listening to Sean type sporadically in the living room  
keystroke by keystroke coding closer to whatever intangible he's scrawled on the whiteboard  
that dominates our living room with its efficient expanse  
the plane tips my wing into the sky and all I see is cloudy night, belted in, neck sideways and  
tight with tension drawing upwards from my spine  
cloudy night  
obscured black  
no bearings  
but it doesn't matter (shrug)  
not for convenience or equilibrium  
or more physically, purity of suspension  
but sometimes  
the helplessness of my acquiescence to capitalism  
startles me  
like the sudden realization on this work trip to Tucson  
it is 11pm  
and the city I thought I lived in glows 5000 feet beneath me  
like the fragile electronic experiment we all are.

## Upstairs

My small dog curled up at the foot of my childhood bed snores softly  
All grey curls and marbled black fur  
Paws stretched wide a splayed chasing the tennis balls through open fields I am sure  
Next to me are CDs long disused and gathering dust  
Below it, the strata deepened in a tape deck untouched for decades, aretha and bing crosby  
Silenced curled round plastic pins  
Waiting for their holiday sonic holiday  
The beanie babies that were once thrown wildly at siblings piled neatly in a basket  
Saved by my mother for the coming grandchildren  
I can almost feel them in my stomach phantom reaches  
Kicking their way out of imagination and my heaving innards  
Crawling with loud mouths and wild Boyle hair  
Towards Rainbow Horse, whom I will reluctantly let them slobber over  
Plucked from his safe basket  
And lurched into their waiting hands.  
I feel an item in disuse  
Waiting for its sunny day  
In my childhood bed  
Too lanky and too smart  
Downstairs is just a stairway away  
The books, the television, the newspapers  
Even the sacred infinite night and the horses who stamp and breathe sweetly  
All mine for the taking  
Yet I am squirreled away by my own lack of motion and will  
Tucked under the sleeping body of my small dog  
Who dreams deeper than I ever will.

# Wind

The wind reminds me of wideness  
Of the scope and shape of the earth  
Desert plains  
And ocean deeps  
The ripped masts of dead schooners  
The ragged roofs of drowning homes  
The whip and snap of flooding rivers  
The crack of pines in a gale  
Branches whirring and deadly through the air  
Impaling the mountainside with sharp wooden bones  
Granite cliffs that whistle and groan  
Hollow caves that core the earth  
Flush with blind eyed fish and dripping ceilings  
And girls hair flush with flower petals  
Wide smiled flossed with golden strands  
Skirts rising and swirling in floral colors  
Maypole strung with fluttering silks  
Hats clutched by lovers as they curl in towards each other  
Cameraman holding the brilliant flash as it crumples and burns, bulb shards mosaic upon the sidewalk  
Pigeons winging upwards towards twelfth story ledges  
Accountant pages thrilled through and open window and a curse  
Laundry diaphanously mundane, hole toed socks held by clips  
Watched by a child with an open book, mouth pursed in boredom.

# Windshield

I am haunted by a splattered windshield  
The small stripes of yellow  
The juicy thwacks as some arthropod chose the wrong trajectory  
Or perhaps we did  
The vortex and airspeed made by our passing would have drawn them in, no fault of their own,  
only blind reasoning and a twitch of the antennae would have brought them closer  
But as I sit here  
In a moonlit parking lot  
Below the granite face  
As the murmur of other slowly sleeping climbers  
Readying themselves for the next day as the small moons of their headlamps bob and weave in  
and out of cars and to bed  
Thinking about the small lives and the insignificance they all had  
Tomorrow when we fill up the tank  
Washing the yellow hemolymph off, I will take a small moment  
A small wipe, as I dunk the wiper  
And watch them run and blur  
The edges diluting  
The small flecks of carapace crusting off  
The layers wiped away  
The work of a minute  
Until the windshield is clean  
And the world is sinlessly clear  
And visible  
From behind the steering wheel as we drive back into the slowly brightening world  
The miles of road disappearing.

## Fallen Lemons

I was running down the alley at the top of the s-trail  
You know, the one overgrown with lemonade berry bushes  
Fence tall as a man  
Wire grids see through  
Where I almost fell off Viska that one time when a stranger appeared from the canyon, suddenly  
On the other side an unkempt lemon orchard waited  
some trees bursting others rotted sticks, an irrigation system still working, the mansion behind  
set back, aloof, uninterested in the fallen suns that littered the floor,  
One fell with a thud and i turned  
I was on my way home and i couldn't stand the indignity of a wasted lemon,  
So with a mile to go  
I picked up the nearest ones,  
groping under the fence  
Crouched furtively in the dirt trail  
And grabbed two small lemons  
I tried sticking them down my bra, but the pain from the fruit was too much to bear  
I'll save such pangs for sex or childbirth  
I had no pockets, only hands  
The last mile  
Hot, humid, the angle of the sun right in my eyes, cutting beneath the brim of my hat and the  
mask over my face  
the lemons were slippery with sweat  
One then the other pace after pace  
They sat on my counter. I made a salad with them. It tasted like a lemon. It did not hurt.

## Favorite Frings

There aint nothing in me anymore.  
Why'd you leave me.  
don't know why you gone.  
Come back otherwise the dark'll creep in all around me,  
pulling up with fangs and claws and slavering jaws,  
and eyes as black as beetles,  
It wring me out it sting me deep with teeth as sharp as needles.  
It the web, in the paw, of midnight and beds my mind will eat itself with acid dripping onto my  
own flesh,  
that cave i'll stay for a thousand years chained and dripped upon,  
no gods to save me,  
no monstrous sons to carry me away in furred mouths  
The acid burned me out, hollowed me out so the gods can fill me with stars and diamonds  
peeling my clay flesh apart and shutting me back up  
with stories that fly out in parrot feathers  
noiseless but with and infrared explosion  
etal and fetals  
and diamonds and dreams  
huffing and luffings  
and ludicrous things  
these are atop of my favorite frings  
Shelly and Ichabod.  
So drown me and crown me and brain me with pearls  
ripple me pale behind  
love me and leave me and drain me of pus  
burst me with one small smile  
I drift and I'll grift with my hair like godiva's  
all venus and ringlets and swine  
til ears echo fears and chains have all names  
my my game ends  
three love  
all to yours.  
You left me still smiling still dripping with smiles  
the one you carved ear to ear  
it weeps scarlet droplets  
i'll hate all few moplets  
that burst from my stomach of churls  
It you touched me you tasted me you left me in tatters  
scarred me with nothing to show  
my innards and gizzards stitched up with flitting lizzards  
will never sit still again  
the creep and the sleep but their feet dont lay quiet

trussed up in my colons and kids  
slash me once more, darling  
i'll rip like Brit Marling and reptilians all over the floors  
that's the only cure i'm afraid, baby  
now don't be too lazy take up that weighty broadsword  
I bought it, right special  
for you sweaty gripped vessel  
five fingers and handles of horn  
It's only ten after seven but the lizards are begging the squirm onto colder climes  
inside there a fire, blazing from newpapyre i've been eating for thirty long years  
headlines burn the best, typefont courier rest size 12 helvetica black  
there hundreds of faces taking streets, going places wearing masks, wearing cloths, some are not  
the streets are aflame, cut me once, say my name  
i'm silenced with a hand over my throat  
I once lived in Goa, here not, just a gloater, looks like she's a ruling class bitch  
smother down deep inside violence clawed and tithed  
i'll have to do surgery doc,  
swing it quick, make it stick  
and let this all out in the air  
i can't even breathe, i'll been down on my knees,  
but i'll do it myself, you can't ever help  
cuseless runt, toothless dick  
it's all done.

## I don't like when I write poetry

I don't like when I write poetry

My mind is unquiet

Or on fire

The world

Generally

Too much

Too beautiful

And I am disappeared

Or full of feelings that spill

I am spilling like paint onto clothes, rough and thirsty, coarse fabrics weave and silk plastic coating

I am spilling like milk over a granite counter, black and silver flecks surmounted by liquid white, rushing in trickles and streamers, banners of a dairy contingent

I am spilling like tears from my own face onto the keyboard

Noticed only by me, now

Unremarkable

A soft glop

Salty

Barrage

One then the other

The only remarkable thing

Is how fast they dry in the wind.

## In the afternoons I reappear

In the afternoons I reappear

Felt hatted

Searching

Too restless for a desk

For employment

For employment of the mind is a full time job that straddles and balks away from plastic things  
and machine minds

It searches instead turning into the wind, sniffing with nostrils flared

To the east

To the sun

To the gardens that perfume my mind

The sage stirring and rushing

Strands withered and dried making a music of a thousand wings

The manure steaming and dampening, giving weight to the rich stink of the earth

A stamp of a horse cutting through

I am in here somewhere

What do I feel of the restless self other than the clickety clack of keyboard

I am an invisibilia drifting molecules through the middle of it all, a cloud of nothingness

Not even a colored swirl of neurons

A hungry emptiness that seeks

And seeks

And wanders and wonders

And cannot

For a single second more

Be editing customer report language at a desk.

# Looking

I didn't find any beauty in today

Strange

I was looking

But perhaps not in the right places

The air outside is poison

Made by the wildfires that burn the whole coast

But none of my relatives houses

Or my own

Memories of fire seasons past drift past like the grey which colors the sun red at noon

Which makes your shadow burn like a saint

The world is stained glass now

Breakable and being shattered by unruly children

One wild throw and the game's up

I paced the driveway and nothing, just blackness as I went to write this morning, not even the silver sunrise lodged in me

It didn't burn

I must have been misaligned with reality

Pacing too fast

Making today a blur

To slow it frame by frame

I could then hear

Like now

The sound of it

The staccato of sports feelings

My father and brother in law

The slow thump of my sister doing laps upstairs

The rattle of the dogs claws in the hallway as the puppies chase and bounce

Ricocheting off the cabinets with deep thumps and creaks, a brushing tumble of fur on wood and the clack of my keyboard like birds feet.

Beauty. At last. I roll it in my fingers like my swarovski pendant, faceted, cold, shining with the reflected light of the kitchen overheads.

I did find it. I just had to listen.

# Old Friend

I've missed you old friend  
The burning in my stomach  
I've missed you like a lover curled round my waist  
Looking out of your eyes, pinwheeling through space  
My room  
The driveway  
Falling scraping my knees  
Red so blood  
Mouth open chipped teeth  
Pain is real you are real you have come again and made me whole

Whole is when you are all things  
Whole is when your body is a part  
Of light  
Of earth  
Of stars beneath your feet  
When you are a thing with no edge  
But a center  
A center that thinks and feels the fan  
The wind  
A direction towards you

Unmanned unknown but certain  
I will start now and walk towards you

I will know your eyes  
You will feel my lips

Soon  
It must be  
I will fall apart in the rest of reality unless you hold me together

It would not be so bad to be all  
To dissolve  
I think then i would be brighter  
I would reflect

Glow

The light on the ocean surface  
And anglerfishes twitching lure  
A scale on the deck of a trawler

Or maybe

The look when your eye see me  
My body, my soul my heart  
I could be the moment my hands take yours

I could be

There and then  
Instead of here and now  
Delusional  
Or dreaming

Of you

My knees are quaking trying to hold up the computer  
Perhaps my poetry should be written by hand  
So it can known my touch  
It can be as imperfect as all the things i was taught  
It could be then  
All the moments i've cut corners  
Saved time  
Run together and crossed ut  
Black and scribbled marginalize and run out of room  
Ruined in slanted  
Stuffed in corners  
Illegible...known only to me  
Always known only to me  
And then sometimes not even me  
Often not even me  
Always.

## Silken, Sleeping.

Today seems as unremarkable as the small black dog lying on the carpet  
Silken  
Sleeping  
Head nestled into a coil of electronic wires peaking out from the gilded mirror  
Under ear curls moving furtively in the fan's drift

Above him,  
partner in anonymity and stillness,  
a plant withers from lack of sun  
I don't know its name,  
but it was beautiful and I wanted it here,  
with me,  
delighting me in its curling greenery  
Tentacles stretching downwards and upwards,  
in a fall like a mermaid green hair before she dives back into the darkling sea

I should move it,  
somewhere warmer, brighter, better  
But instead I've watched its slow decline,  
banana shaped pod leaves fading the brown and dropping to the carpet in husks  
Some godlike humor in me simply watching  
Much like this day  
And that computer that howls at me on the desk  
Coworkers hands banging the screen in red flags, exclamation points

Hush your dinging, dinging dinging, a chimes ringing out, one after the other, continuous and cacophonous  
It is an infernal chorus  
And I wish only to listen to the birds call from the window over the chiming drone of some unknown  
insect and watch another husk fall like a jewel to sit gently on Rocket's coat.

## In these strange times

In these strange times  
Though the times should probably just be called times  
All times are strange  
We once hunted whales for blubbers  
We once put perfume on their heads like eggs and let it melt  
The world once let its teeth rot and mercury on faces  
So these time, different  
And i don't actually know if they are more lonely  
More lonely then a whalemen  
More lonely then a conniving courtier, bewigged and bejeweled  
I have come to think more about myself  
Wants desires  
And i desire not my other half  
But someone to eat dinner with  
They will not complete me  
They can just sit across the dinner table quietly  
Or maybe chop the bell peppers for the salad  
That would be enough  
I am enough for the rest of it  
I am enough for me,  
My thoughts wheel through galaxies  
And murder children unconcieved  
And like anything else  
My living room view has become normal  
Why shouldn't there be mountains and emptiness  
A world left blank for me to throw myself upon it  
People have always been imaginary  
They have always been so far away you have to shout  
Your voice traveling from your window across a string to twin tin cans  
They have always been only images  
They have always been videos  
The world is imagined  
But my dog continues to poop (waits, whining by the door)

## Wall Hanging

The banner of Yosemite moves gently in the wind of my fan  
The thousand of feet of granite softly undulating  
It is now an ocean of granite  
Periodic in its sway  
The plastic blades of the ceiling fan whirling  
Sucking energy from an unseen sun  
The valley center of the wall hanging unreachable  
Thousands of miles lie between me and it  
It rolls up as the fancircles  
Whoor whoor whoor  
It pulses in vibrations of threesomes  
Periodic like waves I cannot ride in  
Miles I cannot drive  
The air is still poison  
My lungs are clean  
Fluorescent like the lights beating down on me  
Like the hand sanitizer on my kitchen sink  
Not like the emptiness of the valley, 2143 miles away  
Pulsing softly on my bedroom wall.

# Four Years

When I look at it  
It seems so small insignificant  
Not even well written

How can four years amount to almost nothing  
Just a scattering of memories and days  
I have vanished  
But yet i am here  
And that thing is nothing  
A golem assembled from laziness and momentum  
The inescapable trajectory of breathing

Until it ceases  
Might as well  
There would be significantly more craft in that  
Then whatever pale things i have assembled here

Even my small dog  
Grey and sleeping in the corner has more originality than me

All i do is dart and wither away from things  
Real bright things

I am a cave fish  
Leave me and my millenia be

Around me the world can burn and turn

The stories can go on being told  
I will create nothing  
I will be nothing  
Simply suspended between space and the great metallic thing at the heart of our planet  
Adrift in the tides of the subterranean

Cold, iceblood in my veins  
Perhaps that is more honest

I think I would be more beautiful than  
Perhaps even the cavefish  
In the gleaming albinism  
With their shaggy teeth and gossamer fins

They find food, shelter, love  
And then continue to exist

All I want is to break the thread  
Take the scissors  
Sever me

This tightness  
Not even a tightrope  
That comes with the tantalizing release of pavement  
So solid  
So beautiful in its hardness and grainy parallelism

Where is my confidence now  
Where is that girl

She dances  
She sings  
Smiles thrown from face to face light her way

She wants to fuck the world  
In its golden summer  
With its wheat and honey

I am coiling, coiling

A snake  
A spring  
An anteverted syllogism

Leave me be  
Do not record this part of me

Leave the furrowed brow

The unwashed clothes  
The dishes in the sink

Let me be alone

Even my own thoughts scream and grind

# Window

I feel like I've been staring out this same window for the entirety of my life  
Which is almost true  
A few months of blinking unremembrance carved from a newborns brains hardly count  
The brief dalliance in Westchester where my prefrontal cortex solidified can be thrown right out  
the window  
This window  
Bounded by corral fences and bouncing sages rumbling into each other  
Though those haven't always been there  
Flickering image of eucalyptus trees and terrifying shapes thrown onto my window at night  
Branches whispering against each other and occasional broken branch cracks  
Or gunshots  
Definitely tree guns  
And then the one time the tree itself uprooted and hurtled itself through the window  
Though i was not inside staring out it  
The authorship of this poem would be significantly more ineffable then  
But the morning light is the same  
Golden soft welcoming  
Coming from somewhere else  
The same rush to find its source  
The head over the hills til I can see it, golden firing,raging in waves and surface flat as a ocean  
Soi could reach out and touch it  
Waiting for me  
I would place a flat hand against the golden wall of the sun  
But I am here  
Sitting  
Lying  
Rushing to find uniforms  
Catholic school  
Scientist  
Tech worker  
They are all the same to certain ends  
Things that signify acceptance and role  
But do they tell what a a heart's mission is  
Because inside  
I still wonder  
After reaching the end where the sun waits for me to tip forward

And greet its flaming heart  
Would it be cold?

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COCO BOYLE is an American poet. She was born in San Diego, California and started writing poetry in 2011, around the same time she started looking up from her runs. Correlate away... This is her third collection of poetry.