

## Disconsolate Brother Returns as Penumbra

This evening is shaped like a helix of fireflies,  
a mouthful of moist pips  
dug from the body of an orange.

I have not thought of you in years,  
but tonight, thin and knob-kneed  
as a heron, you come to lean

against the wall, your shadow  
sewn to my feet. The morning  
you drown in will be shaped like a swell

or a clam devouring its own pearl,  
our mother's letter smudged with salt,  
and the memory will wane

into a mist-burnt morning, loud and red  
as a raven's throat. But now,  
as I kneel on the porch, fingertips

and scrolls of paper brushed with ink,  
you come to me as a dawn heron, as stag  
or stone, shades of gray with no name.

## Postmarked

I am writing to you in favor of storms fanned from the ears of elephants,  
stretched against the sky in this month when dragonflies shake off their skins.

Imagine that your walls are the greatest wonders of the world,  
a hotel made of ash or ice or endangered rainforest leaves,

and that I am waiting for you in the curved glass bubble of air  
sixty-six feet beneath Persian sand draped in waves like lace and light.

The white sip of champagne distilled by sunrise carries you on the tide  
of a thousand sidelong glances from your island to mine.

Your bed is laid with sheets soft as the membrane of a jellyfish  
and lined with the whisper of saltwater just beginning to wake.

You cannot feel the crash of the horizon here in the darkness.  
Your rust-wrapped windows are a chandelier of stingray tails

pointing the wind in all the wrong directions.

At the foot of this bed, lulled by the undertow of sunrise and set,

there is a coffee table for your tea, which will steam and cool until each  
window, kissed by bottom-feeders and undiscovered fish, has fogged.

See, I am writing your name into the breath of the storm, next to all  
the others who have drowned in this room, our room, your room.

The wallpaper is wrinkled with the wet murmur and sway of seaweed.  
The ceilings are transparent and broad as the moment in which we realize

we have grown old together in this room beneath the sea  
where there is no one but us and the sonic knocking of waves on our wall.

We cannot confine our solitary selves to this,  
so I am waiting for you from here, in favor of storms

drawn in and out by your eyelashes as they flutter and still, alone in this room,  
our room, your room, made of ocean and air and selfish letters.

## Bonsai

As a bent man with insubstantial hands  
wires the skin of a miniature myrtle,

waiting a year to break the bark,  
and another to undo the trunk's mistakes,

so my father was neither kind  
nor strong in his bruising, only patient.