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And Still It Moves

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AND STILL IT MOVES

by

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Bachelor of Arts
Wake Forest University, 2007

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts in

Creative Writing

College of Arts and Sciences

University of South Carolina

2013

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DEDICATION

To Mom and Dad: Thanks.

To A.B., P.B., K.B. and M.B.: Dittos.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Ed Madden for his direction, guidance and patience during this process. Thanks to Elise Blackwell and the USC MFA community for being a place to call home for three years. Thank you to Lauren Eyer for being a confidant and friend and thank you Will Garland for moving my washer and dryer on an August afternoon. I wouldn't be here without all of you.

ABSTRACT

This manuscript represents thirty-two poems written over three years. Major themes include: split selves, family, death, astronomy and fear of flying. I hope to showcase a diverse range of poetic forms while maintaining a consistent but fluid voice. The collection takes its name from unconfirmed anecdote about Galileo Galilei: when asked by the Italian Inquisition to recant his claim that the earth moved around the sun he did—and in doing so saved his own life. However, legend has it as he left he said under his breath *eppur si muove* or “still it moves.” Regardless of what we say about the planet, its direction and inclination, it travels on and on. This is my rendering of three trips around the sun.

PREFACE

“All seats provide equal viewing of the universe”

-Museum Guide, Hayden Planetarium

“Eppur si muove”

-Galileo Galilei, under his breath to the Italian Inquisition

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1: When I Least Expect It

My mother split me in half
when she decided that *Elizabeth*
was a mouthful, an algebra of syllables
no child should be expected to learn.

After six months I was *Betsy*—
processed, domestic, a sound churned
until it blushed.

I carry it with me, a place where
I store the pockets of myself
that fit no where else.

Still, I meet up with Elizabeth
during standardized tests,
in doctors' offices. She files
my income taxes. I imagine
her life a more orderly version of mine.

She's out there, somewhere:
recycling, taking up useful hobbies.
She exercises, uses fabric softener,
she stayed with the man who wrote
her letters. She collects what I've lost,

remembers names I've forgotten,
returns her missed calls, our lives
parallel as interstates or veins pulled
around a scar, I catch her eye when I least expect it—
in southern towns the color of wheat
reflected in a windshield
when I see her after all this time she waves,
and I practice the smile you give
when you don't know
when you'll see someone again.

2: It Was New Years When

the Astronomer explained the end of space and time.

It's very simple, she said. The universe will swell
until it's full: a wedding cake one layer too many.

Then it will cave in on itself, running backwards
the chorus played in reverse. What looks like the end
turns out to be the middle. When you make

your toasts tonight, she said, toast to astronomy
and stars born back from a throat-dark slumber.

Toast to science that will bring you once more
to this bright coast and this, your face again.

Toast to the future when you'll hear first the laughter
of your friend, then your own punchline.

3: Genesis of a Jet

“Evolution is like a tornado sweeping through a junkyard and leaving behind a Boeing 747”

The Creation Museum, Kentucky

It begins, as so many things do, with screwing—

a gulf breeze prompts that first bolt to pump

a knot of copper dizzy—junk mounting junk

in iron-rich dirt. Groundwater swells

aluminum until it’s tender as muscle; old

bicycles boozed up on rain are seized

by the white capillaries of lightening. The yard

in the heat of conception: tin cans are silk

worms now, spitting metal into sheets

alloying an old jungle gym and headlights

into steel. Wind splays copper apart, throbs

like squid tongue, thrusting wire, melted glass

to fill what’s empty: as through a funnel

a helix, a galactic washing machine pulsing
scrap begets salvage, salvage begets salvation—

a silver jet stands. The world, as always,
birthing itself new again, urged from
an abandoned womb, ready for the sky.

4: Prayer for the Unpaired

Down here the fridge

is full of leftovers

the left drawer spills

earrings, wound springs,

the phone rings

bringing errands

news that no one's

here to hear.

Bless the broken clock,

the sock,

contact lens,

kicked-in fence

the door knocks

when I'm not home.

There are aisles of road

that lead to

miles of dead-end.

There's a face

that I'll never see

my friend make again.

There's a dog on the median

breathing in

exhaust of trucks and men

looking for the same thing

again and again.

5: And Their Loved Ones Ran After Them

This morning I spilled coffee on myself
and pressing the stain with my fingers I thought
what a shame it is that no one carries handkerchiefs

anymore and worrying about this epidemic of missing
handkerchief users, I thought of trains in old films.

Not a specific film, just the general idea of those

sepia trains chugging down past the platform
while the people on board leaned out and waved
their handkerchiefs and their loved ones ran after them

waving *their* handkerchiefs (because everyone had them
in those days). For a second the loved ones might
catch the train, just this once, but they never do—

and I remember the train I took in December,
coming home to Virginia. Stepping off into the cold
I saw my father waiting for me, the Christmas lights

sweeping into his outstretched arms bright as angels.

His embrace was warm; his shirt was plaid,

same as it's always been. He took my bag

and in that familiar rush of weight leaving I thought

someday this will be a dream. I will dream this

wake up from it, wanting it to be anything but a dream.

And I try to signal to this future dreaming self, tell her

I am here, this is real. But I hear no reply and my head

pounds louder saying yes, I am here! Right now is no dream—

for an instant I think she can hear me, her aching stretched

out through the ghost years like a line of waving handkerchiefs—

but then she is gone again, the silence between us long

and pale as a trail of ash riding a comet. I am alone

where the lights are white, the ground is wet

my father is here and I am home.

6: In-Flight Safety Card

This is the spell:

heads down, hug knees

egg shell oxygen

rows and rows

of windowed sea glass

the belly-gutted engine

pluming pearls of light

slide toward the water

I cast my arms across

my chest. I know

the pull of the tide

I cast my arms.

7: Total Eclipse of the Heart

It is not long after you find out your mother is sick
that you find yourself on stage at a Karaoke bar downtown.

You sing the words off the monitor—determined not to miss
a note. And there, in the rum-dark bar you begin to imagine
your voice a piercing siren of beauty. You are a conquistador
of song, ambassador to life and all music everywhere; you are
the Christopher Columbus of acoustic eighties power ballads,
which makes sense only to you. You are drunk.

Not long before this you were someone who flossed regularly,
filed your nails. Someone said you have a kind smile.

But the seasons have uncorked their own strange ideas,
the world as indifferent to you as this room of moon-gray faces—
disease now being kept at bay by a blue screen ,
the words, as always, dissolving right after they appear.

8: September

Your morning breath on Tuesday
smelled like orange juice and toothpaste
and the sleep left in your skin.
And like every September
we didn't know where the year had gone.

Then the all televisions were on
behind the blue glow the sirens rode the air
and all we thought about was how
in life, your eyes caught the light like the river.
But in an instant short as song
there was no difference
between where you were and
where you had been.
What we had thought was ours
was never ours to keep.

9: Emily

At first, all I could think about was the white
in your eyes, hair falling in gauzy pieces
across your face in the morning, your tiny hands
opening and closing like pumping hearts.
I wanted to keep you for myself and carry
your weight with me wherever I went.

Summer, and then in October we went
north to the mountains. You'd coo to the white
headlights on the road, and I'd carry
you into our new home. I wanted a place
that would shield you, cover you, from the harsh
world. I held all of you in my hands.

Your mother grew quiet, her hands
always a careful lemon scent. She went
on walks for hours, but I wasn't hurt.
I had you, and in the afternoon's white
we visited to our own quiet places,
the park, the store. You wanted me to carry

you everywhere. Then you had your backpack to carry:

a turtle shell with tiny legs poking out. Your hands
struggled to learn the alphabet and I found pieces
of crayon under the kitchen table. You went
to your first day of school forgetting your white
sweater, a Christmas gift, the door shut, a hard

silence followed you. Your mother played hearts
with her friends, took cooking classes with Carry,
and I tried to think at work, away from your white
smile, the way you fluttered your hands
when you laughed. But everywhere I went
I thought of you, math class, recess, the pieces

of your day spilling into mine. Now your pace
quickness this morning as we rush, unheard,
out the door. "Goodbye" you sign when
I try and squeeze you. You carry
on and push past me waving your grown hands.
The wind flushes your face pink, then white.

Every year is the same, when the pieces
that you leave of yourself, a white shadow that hurts:
I want to bend down and carry you, again, in my hands.

10: How to Drive South on Route-29 in June When You Are Trying to Remember

How to be Happy

Pay attention to the signs when
you leave Culpepper. It's morning.

Don't take the expressway; have
faith. Hold out until you reach

Albermale. There the sky flexes
like fish muscle in shallow water.

It is not long until Charlottesville.

The sun will find the stream. Thirty

miles, then Amherst. Light pools
white as a cradle of irises; the dust on

your dashboard becomes bright pollen.

Next you reach Hurt, where the mag-

nolia trees burst, spill themselves silly,
full as flesh or overpoured merlot,

a ballet recital featuring only your
favorite relatives. Follow the road

following the melon colored river,
notice the bend forgiving the bridge,

your hands are warm. This is yours.
After Gretna are the tobacco fields,

leaves pulled and freckled like the skin
of a neck once kissed. Whiskey-drunk

bees baptize the dogwoods while
the houses in the nameless towns

huddle like seagulls before a storm.

There is no time to mourn the beauty

queens and their churches, tired and
turquoise, their hair is falling out.

The season will cave, but the land it
leaves behind silences all that is loud.

Find Carolina when the horizon
congests, violet licking its own wounds.

When night comes to collect the tail lights
you will be siphoned down another vein,

another mountain, down the throat
of darkness, down the song you've heard

twice since Lynchburg, slow; *baby*
slow as slow ever was.

11: April, 1985

For Mom

I am born waiting to speak I am born
milk skin and mouse heart lulling blood
blue through veins branched under snow
wordless she bathes my breath with her
breath claps at the colors we chase
the silence in empty rooms and prism
flames of white irises light pools in
cradles in the windowsill the dust
a bright pollen her fingers move
like mine white flashes of palm opening
and closing like lungs like lips like hearts
like the blank moon at dusk she is
a satellite a cathedral a lunar eclipse
we are two shadows in train headlights
those hours when I wait for my name.

12: It's Spring and My Father is Driving a Blade

across the lawn while my sister

studies in the sun.

She's learning Spanish

from a textbook filled with pictures

of vague looking people

with the same haircut who wear solid

colored t-shirts tucked into faded jeans.

My father the scientist yells

that grass expresses distress through its scent.

Before his voice is lost

to the roar of a machine and billow of pollen

he says that plants use chemicals to warn

of impending disaster.

It's spring and my father gathers remains,

ties them into trashbags

my sister drawing lines from pictures of gestures

to words that might mean the same thing.

It's spring and the dead smell like dirt and honey.

In this chapter, everyone is constantly searching
for a water fountain, or bathroom
or a restaurant called *Comidas!* They hold
out their hands when asking questions,
point to the sky
when talking about the weather.

13: Joy

Rush hour. Turkey-flavored soda is on sale.

I am a pale person in a grocery
of pale people caught in the gauze
of exhaustion.

When I turn the corner there's a line
for free samples of balsamic glazed plums.

Skinned

ripened with vanilla beans; these tiny
hearts speared by toothpicks. I shuffle
towards them with the rest of the hungry
and a child next to me whimpers
plum.

Her mother shakes her head, says:

What idiots. What a pointless wait for just one bite.

As she drags her daughter away it hits me—

an aching, terrific burst of desire.

“But it's not!” I want to cry out.

“It's not pointless. And it's not even a long wait.

Or maybe it is.

But everything is waiting!
So waiting becomes not-waiting, so when we
stand in line wanting ripe plums piled like
 plump moons, wanting to be undone
by their froth, their *plumness* we are grateful
for the line that is a part of a wonderful trail of lines
parading in front of anyone who is ever wanted anything!”

But I say none of this.
Instead, I keep a pilgrim’s silence
until it is my turn to hold out my hands
and with an idiot grin
 open my palms to give thanks
for this, my tooth-picked sample of joy.

14: I've Come to Believe

that the only thing that can ever save us
is to tell the perfect joke at just the right time
in front of a congregation of everyone
we've ever loved. Their rows of teeth lined
up. Old friends communing over warm wine:
this joke that will absolve the past and future.

A priest and a rabbi walk into a bar. I forgot
to read the bible. Sometimes I can't remember
my own name. The funny joke won't care
about any of that. It will throw back its head,
hands in the air. *What do you call a man
without arms or legs.* In the kitchen
my father is telling the one about his father.
The joke of family is funny because we tell it
to each other. *A blond and a brunette jump
off a cliff.* You were always only yourself
in the morning, the your-skin-on-my-skin jokes
that was only funny after you were gone.
You might have heard this one before. The joke
of the perfect joke will be that once it's told

it will have to be told again with all the pain
of a prayer—it throws a punch and a line for salvation.

15: Telephone

We passed the word around a circle

mouth to ear

ear to mouth

we passed the word through the circle.

Or: we passed the word from

tin cup string tin.

It was always the same: the word

we began with

was nothing like the word

we had at the end.

So I kept all of them

I kept all your words.

*

Now my friends play telephone

with real telephones

the satellites in their circle above.

In school we learned

the first words spoken across a wire—

Come here, I need you.

And here I learned,

how to make a name I want

into a word I don't want.

I watched my friends in the circle

hold the word until it grew

so hot they couldn't stand it

So hot they left it cooling in the

windowsill of someone else's ear.

*

And so I pass through their din in my memory

the words

we begin with words like

light as a feather

nothing like the words we have

in the end

stiff as a board.

16: Forgiveness

The wife tries to leave one morning
after years of brushing her children's teeth
but everything returns—
the drip in the faucet, the sting
to the wound. I want to tell you something
beautiful but it escapes me, sea glass washed
to sand, catching the light in the water.

Day after day, the grocery bagger
looks people in the eyes, the onion
peels collecting in ribbons at his feet.

The fork shakes free from the garbage
disposal. It never stopped raining
anyway; the pieces of scrap metal
from the accident turning up
as parts to a espresso maker,
in the meantime the dog naps
on the doorstep, the sun in his
belly, the screen door slamming
behind him every time you leave
but he never wakes up and you always

come home. There are parts of me
of me I give to you again and again.

The sap needs some salt
just as the syrup needs the frost.

Just because there's not enough
doesn't mean there's nothing left.

17: Math

God help me, I have tried to forget

everything I ever learned about you.

You were one tricky son of a bitch. And yet

at dinner, when someone asked who knew

you, I thought of symmetry, your angles.

Sweet parabolas, how your lines

once undid me, slipped in and untangled

the knot my young heart designed

for itself. But you kept going when I said

stop. Calculus, that cold screw of reason;

it hurt with a precision so sharp it divided dread

like fat from the bone, numbers then a season

grown stale. So this evening when we split

the check I lied, said *Oh I was never any good*

at you. But I was. I knew you well once. I admit

that most days—when I subtract where you stood—

I am alone. Like now, sitting on this roof
listening to the city sirens ride the pollution
in their waves of trigonometry, proof—
you said—every equation has a solution.

18: Wrong Way

Don't take this the wrong way, you said.

But I did. I took it all very wrong:

the exhaust smoked gravel

on the driveway

a pollen count of joy

burned on the windshield

even the price of gasoline

each one a sinking marble.

It'll be fine, you said

You'll see, you said

But it wasn't and I couldn't see

the road filled with tail lights

steaming exhaust—

here I am crushing your fender

trying to get you

to take it the wrong way too.

19: Debris

As when Goodyear offered to airlift 700 tons of used tires
off the coast of Fort Lauderdale to form a better—
spectacular—coral reef and everyone applauded
thought nothing of it, until ten years later those same
tires have refused to take root and they're floating
even now somewhere in the gulf,
a pocket of carcassed rubber growing stale
that no one knows what to do with
so they don't talk about it
your

name washes up again in conversation
trailed by the curdled memory
of your own laugh.

20: New Years Resolution

More than vitamins or violin lessons, pills or Pilates

what we really need more of this year

are memberships to gift-of-the-month clubs.

There are many things that can be sent monthly:

Macintosh apples in March, spiced goats' milk in September.

In July you can pair your cured Canadian bacon

with that month's micro-brewed, hand-crafted pilsner

while circling the day on the calendar when the peonies

are due to arrive. Maybe this was the year

you wanted to travel to Asia and Africa. Maybe this year

you wanted to learn to cook, fall in love or break

someone's heart, wanting everything and wanting it all at once.

The gift-of-the-month club doesn't expect any of that.

It tries only to give you the coming year a little bit at a time.

Happiness, like gourmet mozzarella or hot sauce

is rationed, paid out in seasonal installments,

saved for special occasions. Someone once told me
that I barrel through life like a criminal, using pleasure
and pain as getaway cars and then setting them on fire
because I don't have the patience it would take to save myself.

But the gift-of-the-month club always saves
the best for last. It is a promise to preserve
the coming year, reason to not blow it all
by February. A hope that by next December

we'll still be here, padding around in our slippers
enjoying our latest shipments of wild thyme
organic tea or lavender honey, resolved to be happy
with the what's been arriving all along.

21: Electric Bill

Because all winter I left the lights on,
dialed the heat up, plugged in every appliance,
burned through sockets wrapped with the nerves
of a current there never seemed to be enough of:
the electric company has sent me a bill
with a bar graph that demonstrates exactly
how much I am supposed to pay. Black lines
like a cardiograph or ultrasound—
a receipt for something I knew was coming
but had no plan for anyway, lines like the stray
voltage of my life during that time, my heart
wired, switched on and off, charged and stuttering,
building a debt it had no intention of repaying
because the only way to love something is to use it
until it's gone: to forget how much you will owe.
Before I leave the house at night I turn everything on,
the windows beaming like beacons across the
canyon darkness of the lawn. I want to see how
long the electricity will last, if it will still be there
when I return home.

22: We Like the World Because We Do

We are pioneers of space:

like the one behind the cabinet

where you store your old toothbrushes,

or the bathwater pooling in the grout.

The moon of your tiled kitchen

is cold, but at night we rove,

find the feast you left under

the oven. Behind the refrigerator.

the fan orbits but the air is calm.

Down here, the sky is far beyond us

but this is the dark cavern we like.

We are saddled in our suits

of shelled armor, holding us together

pressing us to the ground. The world

is alive because we are, so close
to you while you sleep, you sleep.

23: Everything's Fine

There is so much honey. I don't know where
we're going to store it. Jars and jars of honey.

Maybe we'll put it all in the garage? There's a space
between the tulip bulbs and power tools.

That's what Mom wanted for her birthday this year—
honey. Three months out of treatment and she says

it's the only thing that keeps her tea from tasting
like acid, so we ordered it by the gallon.

It's afternoon now. All the windows in the house
are open; Dad's ripping weeds from the ground

while I unpack the honey. The breeze is a wine
so warm it's hard to swim or see your way out of it.

There's room in the attic, too. Do you think the honey
will rot? It's been so hot lately

I forget to remember winter ever happened.

It's easy to get used to these things.

Tonight we're going out to celebrate
at a restaurant downtown. Maybe

it will even be just like last year—the waiter
bursting out of the kitchen, the cake flaming

in the draft, the room so bright that the year
before is drowned like a hiccup in syrup—

we'll come home to a house full of honey.

24: Why Thank You Notes Are a Necessary Chore

Sometimes it is hard to know what to write. *Thank you*

kindly for the Confederate flag crockpot

Or *What a pleasure it was to receive*

a personalized egg cuber

It is especially difficult when you receive such items as:

a pedometer, a salad spinner, slippers two sizes too small

a lottery of disappointments you keep in closets,

cupboards, under the bed, taking up room

that was meant for all the things you really wanted.

Write anyway. Craft your notes with care,

parse out what brought you joy, acknowledge

what has been offered. Keep your penmanship legible.

Express gratitude even when you desperately

hoped for something else. *I saw this NASCAR shot glass*

and thought of you Daniel said

the Valentine's before he gifted another woman a ring.

And when you have nothing left to write

your gratitude dull as unpolished silverware

you spend the nights worrying about the careless presents

you've been known to give—

take a page from Miss Manners

and reply to all the thank you notes you've received

with more thank you notes

Your Thank Yous insisting themselves on each other

swelling until they are the size of lion hearts, until they burst

thank you thank you thank! you!

explode like tickertape across the parade of your desires

while the waning notes of the marching band trumpet

drown out how foolish you are for wanting more.

25: Jinx

I said it when I left my car
without quarters for the meter.

Jinx when I ate pink sushi
two days after its expiration date.

Jinx when I ran a red light.

Jinx when I rode a mo-ped
across the Queensboro bridge,
my eyes closed the whole time.

The subway doors close
before I reach them,
the high wire shutters in the wind
I'm mixing a drink and thinking of you—

jinx, jinx, double jinx, you win.

But just when it seems
I've jinxed my own jinxes,
the plane lurches toward disaster,

I jinx it all again, no take backs,
the land below receding even faster.

26: Reality

Last night a woman got up from the toilet
and avoided flushing her own baby on *I Didn't Know*
I Was Pregnant. While next on *My Monkey Baby*:
the harrowing tale of Julie and her chimpanzee-child,
Amanda, whose taste for prescription medicine
sends her to an early grave. Every week, daughters
live on hiccups, diapers, on *Toddlers and Tiaras*,
faring only slightly better than the children on *Wife Swap*
who look in to the camera with eyes as blank and saturated
as donut holes. When I fall asleep thinking of home, I wake up
with a headache on the left side of my head. When asked
to describe her own family, the mother on *18 Kids and Counting* abuses
too many sports analogies to count. I like the way chocolate syrup
poured into milk dissolves in the shape of a galaxy.
My own mother reminds me of the Australian social spider
profiled on *Wild Kingdom* whose body turns to mush after birth
to feed her children that they might
enter the world with a full stomach.
Last year on the *Real World*, KellyAnne chased her pregnancy
scare with tequila So far the Large Hadron Collider

in Switzerland has been unsuccessful
in recreating the moment the universe was conceived.
A Baby Story follows pregnancy, labor, birth, but
cameras are never there to catch where it begins—
though I imagine beginnings are milk white
like Jesse's skin on *Sixteen and Pregnant* who weeps for
what seems like days, inconsolable. She has a headache on
the left side of her head. I hope the best for her but prepare for
reality; the spider-arms of love collide in their painful orbit,
ready to dissolve into mush, to be eaten, churned in a stomach,
splayed for a camera, embarrassed by analogies.

27: Sky Mall

Up here, we sell a Sphinx CD rack,
or a Siamese Slanket™. Up here
we've got your Mini-Monoliths, in black
or faux-stone ready to amuse, endear—

even when you hit a patch of rough air
you can pick up the phone embedded
in the seat ahead of you, the Dog Hair
vacuum mere minutes away. The dread

you feel as the plane begins to plummet
is eased by a Personal Foot Tanner
or a Canine Genealogy Kit.

Garden gnomes made entirely of fur.

When you no longer see the sky, relax
because up here we don't charge a sales tax.

28: Zoetrope

This is how the scene is stripped,
cleaved, fit through slits:

A lizard in a cage escapes
only to return. Or: the man strikes

his match, then it is dark again.

A young girl jumps and lands

an old woman; jumps to be young.

In here, the train runs circles around

itself, the conductor barreling
toward the caboose, all things trailing

the promise of their own shuttering orbits,
the world bound, fit through slits.

29: Turbulence

When the seatbelt light comes on *bing*
the woman next to me counts the thuds

with Hail Marys

and I pour myself more cheap wine
from a tiny bottle which is my cheap
tiny prayer for this our

400-ton vessel,

when the pilot comes on over the PA

we've hit a rough patch

I press my nose to the window,
and mentally draft a complaint to the airline

and God for trapping

human beings inside the steel belly
of a machine 30,000 feet above
all the people they have ever loved, so

when the plane finds a pocket
of calm air, gauzy redemption draped

in thin jokes

home remains a buoy I believe in but can never find,

the communion of time and miles heaviest in the sky,

but then I look out to the heavens breaking up

the southern wheat below stretched warm

as the arms of my mother

full of grace,

for this minute I am saved.

30: Talk Radio

For Rush Limbaugh

Smoke breath of bare chests

cruel curl of curtailed caress:

someone's sky is a fist.

31: Beach

Imagine you're the kind of person

who can't fall asleep

so you spend your nights staring

at the headlighted shadows

on the wall. Now imagine

I can take you somewhere else

somewhere very else

a whole other planet else.

On this undiscovered planet

there's a beach. There's a beach

on this planet

with pebbled sand like a beach

you went to when you were young

but it's not that beach

though the waves still curl the same

on the drifting alien planet where

the sky's a bleached blanket

no human has ever seen.

Now that I've brought you here

I don't know what to do

with you. You thought I did

didn't you?

Maybe I just want you to lay down

so I can lay down next to you

here under the blanketed sky

that bright grain of Earth

a million light years away.

32: True Story

For years you ignore the seam running
down your side, until one day
you find a sewer's needle. Pull the stitches out—

underneath your skin you find more skin
pale and smooth.

There's a whole other person
living inside you. Your life wrapped
around someone else's life:
her heart and her bones.

Only your teeth are your own.