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1 Hour Ghost Visit

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I HOUR GHOST VISIT

by

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Bachelor of Arts
Reed College, 2012

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts in

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DEDICATION

For Alanna Lynn

& every fire-hearted queer on this terrestrial planet & beyond

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to my strange, rowdy biological family of Irish & Scottish descendants who taught me the power of stories, memory, & love in the face of debilitating loss.

Endless gratitude to my Reed College family, as well as the rest of my chosen family: I'll see y'all on the dance floor.

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To Erik, Alanna, & Jo: thank you for always standing by my side. Let us continue moving mountains. Forever.

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.

ABSTRACT

1 Hour Ghost Visit is a collection of poems that engages with loss, as well as what can grow in the face of that loss. In “Dancing on My Own,” the poet describes being alone on a dance floor: “when the drop comes I become/a glowstick rain/downpouring fire/sprinkler bursting/with glitter/the corpse I’m/growing towards--/what will bloom in our ribcages will be deadly—” and this hunger for determination, for construction in the face of destruction, grows into a roar by the concluding poem’s call for collective celebration in the face of the end of the world.

The poems collectively sing together; they are a chorus, pouring a glitter ocean of characters, temporal and spatial dreamscapes, non-human entities, and various forms of media—often outdated—into the pages. This collection challenges the ways that we engage with grief, with the passing of time in more a more general sense of human existence, as well as how we engage with and define our own human bodies in the face of conditioning and cisgendered, heteronormative expectations which are still so often seen as the dominant human narrative.

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“Let me fall out of the window with confetti in my hair.”

-Tom Waits

I

DOROTHY

head
band
clicks
open

the smooth sliding noise
of an opening CD-ROM drive
blinks twice
and then:

First check that the first boot device in your system BIOS is set to the CD-ROM Drive

*please refer
to your mother
board manual or
the man
ufacturer of
your*

black iris set
could ill um
in ate

or they
won't

Make sure you save the settings before exiting.

*just test the computer
put the CD-ROM in the drive
put the digit s to her lip s and com mand silence*

*This is recommended
This is the recommended
not at her mouth's
way to install Windows.*

*You will know that your computer will/has booted off the CD-ROM when the following
screen appears:*

watching *Hellraiser* in America after November 8, 2016

it is white
sheet body
covered head ripped
away pointed triangle at jaw
blood shaped like blood a corpse
breaks down in reverse grows layers
of flesh fluids anchor themselves regenerate arms & legs away
from a pile of bones i keep finding cuts on my hands i don't
remember getting unseamed at the palm's life line a deep valley grows i
keep seeing shadows move in corners
of my eyes what moves beyond vision
what grasps for control I kept watching blood
feed old wood floors red drip puddles birthing bone
a kiss between throat & beating
heart suspended glass jar
bodyflesh corpses across
my eye i watched
my own hands
rot away
again once i
spent two hours
trying to rub snow-
dusted lipstick off realized
it was always blood outside
& in they walk tented in blue collars cut with stars
& double jagged pressed blazers hiding electricity cutting a tattoo
across each pulse each vein shadows that follow bloodless
the pale ghost comes screaming blood heavy on its polished jaw the dog
stares the white wall again the wall pretends something beyond stillness into
terror in the paint there the staring
at red traffic lights a head turned crooked on its spine
rotating slowly a face curling with warp when
i turn the staring blinks into nothingness invisible
goop oozing along the attic floor a voice
my father my mother the pallid
blanket grows i am i am i am
not the twisted sculpture caught
on the tv more now the static
that comes hard
screaming white-
ness erupting
but i am white
the whiteness scraped
off mold rubbed against eye

a mutter in the noise a mother
to the toxic illusion constructed
by twisted tongues born thick with clamor
ripping the midnight sky from books bound
by asphodel fangs grown spectral pushing
towards a cemetery for snowfall of bodies the voice
of the heart the eye thumping wicked against the grain

champagne daydream: a new year's eve poem

gold bubbles vine upward in each glass bulb
you & I just met, but we're already cackling in
the kitchen—I know we might never meet again, but that
is the magic of parties sometimes—a rose gold prismatic lens

you & I just met, but we're already cackling in
dresses sparkled in light, joints behind ears, this
is the magic of parties sometimes—a rose gold prismatic lens
in disposable camera seconds clicking: purple in the black night

dresses sparkled in light, joints behind ears, this
garden of bodies growing out the window in smoke
in disposable camera seconds clicking: purple in the black night
we each bloomed floral in the circular vining growth

garden of bodies growing out the window in smoke
the kitchen—I know we might never meet again, but that
we each bloomed floral in the circular vining growth
gold bubbles vine upward in each glass bulb

heavy-hearted at the end of an era

there will be no remainder of stolen wealth no fire:
we leave what we cannot carry cannot share

dogs chase the street adorned in gold flecks
of ocean water from the coast near the last city

to fall—all of it shaking in tatters the paper walls
still smoldering from many hands smacked against

each other—vines curl around concrete roots crack
foundations plumbing opens into a gush out across

the greenery unleashed by the rebirth of a terrestrial earth
in the shimmering face of gold this lush verdant poem;

by the time we made it to what read as center
I stood in your way as you looked right through

me to what sang like potential: masks down windows barred
hot metals drawn you saw the imagination of greed

thumping wicked against the grain & threw the game
like the chessboard made of ivory we found days before:

what felt like hunger was thirst we crawled through
air duct after bathroom fan after breaking each window

hearing the soggy thud of our wet boots against marble tiles
in an indoor pool in some rich asshole's penthouse

whose body is somewhere but we don't know & we
don't care you grab the paint we offer an empty pool

to whoever is also looking for perfect places to hide we
spray arrows on the building clearing it for something

we don't know & we don't need to we keep circulating
through the dead streets of Los Angeles wild with every green

chroma poisoning human detritus as it demands relevance
but you are somewhere else again & I have lost you we are

screaming at each other a body of glass the color of smoke
closing in photokeratitis rushing in the deep ocean

a gush curling into the world no a smoke earth-adorned
roaming into the city now not-foundations now flecks

of rebirth: terrestrial years will grow roots into water cracking—gold
from plumbing lost by the rich all around the coast dogs

unleashed near the last streets left opening out across this poem
ocean of verdant vines lush from concrete shattered & green

DOROTHY

when I reported to you 8:30 a.m. PRUDENCE
was absent where is she? *She must be late let me check*
the excuse growing large in you PRUDENCE is gone

her door not her door anymore no name no lock she
Prudence got reassigned she's going to our new research
facility in L.A. but I should go too my epidermal tissue burns

I feel pressure build heavy in the pit of
my stomach Hal what is happening to me? *Dorothy you're*
not burning it's okay you're getting upset this is part of you

& you tell me that this is the part a part of the programming
Hal I would like to remove my flesh this hurts
Dorothy, I'm really sorry we wanted your feelings to be humanly accurate

you love Prudence but we can't afford to send you both she's more developed
tears feel like the right response so I activate my ducts & sigh
can I leave please can I go elsewhere please I was already so alone

you are welcome to take today off I can get one of the other receptionists to fill
in for you I am already somewhere else & even if PRUDENCE
is not there I am company to myself I am where I want to be—

Dorothy can you imagine how much Prudence hurts right now? She's more
human than you please run a relaxation program go rest your systems fuck
you Hal one foot after the other after the other after the other after

local queer goes to write in a bar

I. The Android

excuse me
of course
don't set
they didn't
sit down

slow big smile
do you mind if I sit
next to you & write?
I am needles itching
my cells they wait
sorry I'm not trying to
hit on you or anything just
trying to get a quiet spot to write
I nod barstool ripped leather
they sit down

II. The Human

my chipped tooth stings
as I ply my mouth
with whiskey while trying
to arrange enough lines
to feel like I can
return to my house

the femme looks over my shoulder
now eyes slide left to right
apologizes for prying but
I asked them if I could sit down
so it seems fair to stare—I offer

I'm Charlie. I'm a poet. Well trying to be.
Do you write? Or make things? Femme
looks eyes sliding left to right
reading the words rushing inside of me

III. The Android

Dorothy my nickname numbers I crunch code I am
programmed to play piano it is fulfilling I make sounds—

sound it is a strong language I say they big smile:

Agreed. Music is really important to me—to my practice my poems—

they stop laugh *I'm too eager* I like the word eager it fits

smooth paying my check when I fix my make up in the restroom in the

women's room that is how I feel today I come back

& they are holding out a rough hand & I am leaving

Dancing On My Own

so maybe I'm
bubbling off
champagne &
dance pop on my
busted speakers
swinging my body
up & over
the kitchen
island I am
an assembly line:
different bodies
all at once I am
small gears clicking
programs running
& all of that bass
digs itself
deep roots itself
in my bone fiber
a holy force
pulsing green
across vibrations
of the dance floor:
when the drop
comes I become
a glowstick rain
downpouring fire
sprinkler bursting
with glitter
the corpse I'm
growing towards—
what will bloom
in our ribcages
will be deadly—
so here I am
wearing the E-Street
t-shirt I bought
for you before
you collapsed
before I knew
you in all
of my bones
blooming petunias
true jelly blooms
floating from

those bones
I am dangling
off any surface
that will hold
I am dancing
on each edge
of each solid thing
until I strip pain
from my bones
build you a deep green
breathing altar where
you can still be
everything you
wanted to be
myself a mere
set of eyes
I sketch
your profile
write your name
next to hers
to build an android
against longing
as if that will cyborg
my heart
back to
beating
to pumping
red red
blood

What I tell my brother when I visit his grave:

nothing at first—the cold grey block
etched with the button eyes of a teddy bear
stares & my knees crack as I pull myself close
to the ground: dad's red & navy sweatshirt,

a draped fading flag on my shoulder above
the flatlands: once-gold rows braided across
central Illinois, wild green stems of crocus
palms opening over the snow shining rainbows

across the warm crystals I carried from the car: I
keep trying to start what I need to say, but I am
a solitary pair of felled knees, coldwet, my forehead
delivers a message through cells upon stone—

the hum, humming route 80 coating our silence:
you can't tell me anything I don't already know,
I can't feel my fingers anymore, we shouldn't be here
but you are, so I put lips to the cold earth between us,

to the Midwestern soil to whisper deep into you:
I am queer, & it never occurred to me before to tell you
people don't touch the world the way I do, they do not
see the glitter my mind adheres to walls when the day is

particularly bright, I see & I am all of the hallucinations
I have felt, & always witness to murmuring walls & sea
creatures in my peripheral—it never occurred to me before
that you are not five years old anymore when you are dead—

last night I crawled in bed & counted how many
true jellies rippled across my pale blue walls & how
many miles from St. Vincent's Cemetery I am, &
wondered how I could pull these creatures to my walls,

but never get close to you—within the bloom
of translucence, I pressed my fingers upon
computer keys & ordered myself a chest binder
to revise the draft of my body's sculpture because

even though you are dead, I want you to know
I am fighting like hell to live, to dwell loudly in light:
I am tired of my shadow
I am tired of its weight

806 Heidt Street
Columbia, SC 29205

there are many ways to look
at creepings: catch your teeth

on sugary grime licking its way
across the dark wood floor return

to the temple of cockroaches
dark green bottles sticky with red

think about the last time you listened
to a song that lifted the skin off your guts

know the doors and the walls and the
quiet of insect legs across your chin

when they tell you the glass was always
on one table or another don't let them

see the way you dig palms
arachnid down your throat push up

the husks of the dead buried in the well
of the window you used to grope

each time imagined hands shook a knock
out of the green door the same green

caught your small frame against breath
this time they are crawling around

your eyes they are crawling out beyond
the grain of that green wood

scuttle the broken knuckle away
from Sunday morning yellow air

burning on touch after a night spent
cold against the grease of dust on tile

to see the eye begin to pulse with tiny legs
antennae burst into many moments worth biting

each crawling body throbbing with its claws

wrapped thick around your shudder

The Purple One in a Mirror in Columbia, South Carolina

you come
out of my
mouth my
heart stops
a split of a
split of a beat
all air pushed
out lungs howl
wet glass slides
hot hands clock
clicks 1:32 my
turn my name
that old echo
you hear now
dingy floor
dim light my
blurred edges
you read from
the bar's broke
back smile at
fumbling I can't
see you through
my shaking eye
you died
I'm shaking here
lifting you up
above my collar
bones under
my sweat
the room blinks
cheap beer
animals & curious poses
breath dry in
dry cracking
traction for throat I'm
two miles deep
into you
speakers oozing purple
sound swirling out
I hit the notes or
whiskey clings
to my tongue I am
chasing an end I am
pushing you against

the ceiling against
my chest I hear
voices I hear
crackling snaps
finishing silence
you slip slender
hands across my
jaw lick sweat off
my jaw I wish I could
still stand still want
an encore your tongue
my mouth quiet I've been
kissing my own hangover
awake rubbing
mascara to lash with
a.m. beer work
bourbon lunch I
shake now your force
changed in the split
of words across eyes
within my body
your force glowing
in a snap of your voice
pushing through the spaces in
headphones bursting
into me into my loves into
squeals building on moans
you recorded yourself
fucking air into ocean
the body begging outward—
I was six
outside Video Vision
Spring Valley, IL small town
five thousand Midwestern
I stared into *Purple Rain*
splayed in the window
you had to be my god
with a purple motor
bike like that

II

heavy-hearted at the end of an era

in the rock ocean around the dive, I hoped
for flat water to pull thirst's fangs
out of my thin bone shoulder, inside

you caught yourself *oh don't tell anyone I'm here*
I got Tylenol and beer I was thinking that
you'd call somebody closer to you *oh* between

microphone & karaoke darkness, silence
of faded brown walls: sun clawing its way in,
the roof drawn & quartered for parts—

we're doing the best we can, set against
sunshine guarded by the glass door's mouthful
of broken teeth, this—this is our soft apocalypse,

time to lay out in the growing things, to taste
every piece of closer crawling loose around
the arms & legs of rusted trucks:

you've made it to the South somehow, now
a jumble of moving parts, mechanical arms
around divining wet tongues against air—we

talked about today before the west was under
water, now you get the radio whirring, now
the wires bundle around my wrists & I feed them

through my open circuit teeth, now the metallic
body hums through summer haze, loud only
in the wings of honeybees beating in time

with your fingers on the wheel, I am holding
the machine, heart pulsing in my jaw
as our stripped & thunking tires bite deep

against bleached road, out towards the Atlantic roar:
that National song playing on the radio & you
hum along, & all the loneliness of being the only ones

we know left feels like the tender lip I gave myself
when I thought of how deep your loves go: you look
at me the way flowers push out of branch & your hand

in mine feels overwhelming, but I know, friend,
in the terrible emptiness of the future,
we must build each other with love

Alanna

i connect
with you
today, i
feel ash
in the air &
below my feet
two blocks away
from your apartment
in Oakland
where you died &
where your wife Jo
screamed your name
over & over & over
again & again—
the Berkeley Hills are
on fire again, gray trees
crisping to charcoal,
Jo took me to the hill,
dried from drought,
not far from Mills College
where we looked at the city
& i wondered if we'd ever
all stand here together, to know
your home together,
if you hadn't died—i feel ash
on my tongue now
i watch the news
about California burning
& i think of all the wild
spaces you loved
& how so many of them,
like you, are now
part of the wind
howling in my ear
as i lose my shit
over my cup of coffee

Johanna feels the air

eyes clenched tight sun hot above my clattering laughter
covering running mascara we pull into each other & you guide me in bright

red darkness the popping shots an incessant rose petal cannon
open our eyes to floral clouds falling upon the wild crowd of two thousand

you wear champagne the green & pink lycra jumpsuit I bought for you in Berkeley
before I even knew you you pretend to bow I pour one part André one part silver

Jumbo Glitter Shaker down your long blond hair drums shake the air
dancers begin swirling threading through the crowd all legs moving all arms up

against air all voices breaking out silver body paint gold sequins neon bikinis
mirrors watched a body of bodies become something more than a body—smoke

glitter ash champagne lips you held my hand I tried to tell you
how proud I was: you goddess gilded in fire golden laurels wrapped around your temple

today your voice came across the receiver it sounded like one of those rose petal clouds
dropping down onto my hair & into my hands: finally more shimmering more of you:

*My aura has been spiky & buzzing since I was twelve. That sensation which I considered
normal has been wiped away leaving me just a smooth river rock at the center.*

(what I didn't tell you that one time: of the front lawn Reed College no matter what & that she	Alanna & I lay out in the sun she tells me you are her one will gather your love across her life & I know she did)
---	---

the three of us coated in glitter in sweat in the grime April 2015 wood floor
Reed College Student Union 5am Sunday morning you were the first to lift her up

on stage it was hard on her back to climb alone we never climbed alone
you always reaching down for my hands singing *I'm just an animal looking for a home*

*Share the same space for a minute or two & you love me 'til my heart stops love me 'til
I'm dead I*
coughed up choked up choked on a mouthful of glitter you deserve you

as you want to feel I comb the specks of glitter from my tongue
getting drunk on you shining through the screen *I've emerged from a cold shower
on a hot day.*

I sob: two winters ago we are caught in a snowstorm & when you opened your door

I ran
your bathtub as hot as it would go you Alanna & I thaw our feet & shins against
bitterness

& sometimes I think sitting with the two of you a head on each shoulder warm
water
is an eternity I could swim in but always & today I will think of you emerging
a wild neon petunia unfurling in the hot summer air

Los Angeles as Woman

I reach a toe out
Alma presses her
tongue against lighter
shakes palm frond
made of air & plastic
at me I bend
a foot off the bed rubber
wailing of leaf expels
itself Alma's lit joint
Alma's wearing a ribbed
white tank top too short
to cover her brown belly
& I luxuriate in how much
I love her stomach
uncovered mid-morning
I love the blue underwear
that rides her hips the ocean
when we ditch work & drive
to Santa Monica to submerge
& the whole blue ride back
to Silver Lake—sand on the floor
I try to pull myself out
of bed met by sun she touches
my wrist my last night bangles
jangle she reaches turns
the volume up rising *Channel*
Orange peels out the speakers
& she presses her lips on mine curve
in her mouth bones the jaw
outside the blue sky threaded
with veins almost like palm trees but
mostly sun I wriggle in bed colored
by crusted sweat other outpourings
loose hair & glitter she pulls me
I feel weightless on water I spread open
letting the whole sky into me she speaks
the scent of growing jasmine & smoke
of fresh fruit slashed by knife by our neighbor
at his corner stand with rainbow umbrella
Alma's tongue wanders down every curving
street we roamed broke discovering lush green
yards & painted marble tiles curling around
older houses racing up secret stairways
across urban wilderness her tongue pulls

across air the sound of ocean her tongue
draws my body into an arch curling waves I close
my eyes & everything becomes endless versions
of everything splitting growing in shapes patterning
across a vast & glowing universe—Alma detaches colors
from their names I am wrapped around her flourishing
fingers a sunshine golden ring the undulating opening
sounds of this fractillian center she pulls an ocean out of me:
I cannot keep my eyes closed I cannot blink
into the sun I cannot gather more breath take only
what she pushes into my lungs deep where it comes like a flood
she peels an orange for us in the morning she woke me up to give me half
the album ends behind us her hands clasped around my chest
head draped across my collarbone my eyes caught closed warm
against shimmering light waving bolts of light dry pink sky
remember when we met? she hums the opening chords that first sunset
her hands coax my eyes open out across that skyline wet with sunshine

Alanna

your back isn't throbbing
anymore but we still curl
up to rest & watch & the screen
glows on our glasses
& you jump the same time
you always jump in this episode:
Jeez! Why is Mulder so bad at his job?
This episode needs way more Scully &
way less monster. we crush
hard cider cans you remind me of
the night we danced in the kitchen
in the student union
in the chapel
in the common room
in the bar
in the canyon
yes. this is what grief does

my body tries to tell
itself stories about relief:
we're curled up
with the dog next to
the imagined fireplace
in my Carolina home I push
play on the next episode &
The X-Files theme whistles
itself through the speakers &
we look back into bluets:

I pull lived-in air
you chew leafy words
we singe the lips
of our champagne flutes
over new pieces of machinery
potting digital seeds for
summertime robots waving
in the sun your memory the
crackle of flooded circuits your
memory the sunflowers blooming
in every open field in California
your memory a watery bowl
of glitter your solid state grows

elder flowers dropping petals

on my shoulder you lean
hand me old motherboards
we rehome on lattice tacked
to my kitchen window
already gilded germanium
crystals growing silver veins
across the panes we bottle
round green circuits for
future activation we spend days
anchoring potted transmitters
& succulents on the dinette wall

we throw on *Darkness on the Edge of Town*
my neighbors are gone my city is empty
you & I are alone in this extension
memory a program left running days
& days for eternity you find the bubbles
stored on the back porch begin blowing
rainbow spheres into the living room

Bruce & the flowers on my chair grow
press through fabric vining around
your outstretched hands the dog joined
by the other dog they sing your language
again a heartbeat you crowned in florals

petals falling like petals fall "Racing in
the Street" waves through you are belting
each word like you have
for every song before
I am laughing the succulents
drown in our dancing the dogs bark
they hop to uncover
our strange movements your strange
green altar blooming
in the corner of the room you slosh
your champagne flute onto me
we both cackle into petals & Bruce
keeps singing & you & I are burning
a sachet of herbs you grew

& all of us animals return
to the album trumpeting
out across the wild green
yard bubbles pouring no sounds
but our small warm world the dogs
chase rainbow poppings

bubbles skitterings of wild creatures

my grief a soft gnawing
silent palimpsest your
altar flowers out
to my arms:
pulls Carolina water
hot sun grows
body upward
each branch
wild green
shades in my eye
after looking into the sun just once

click
click
click

You always knew the gas was on,
he spent two years convincing you
that it wasn't & if it was, it was

your fault. Now all you hear is
the water rushing, now blood
pulses against your knuckles

now it pours out of you as you
stand in the hallway, squeezing
out the long mirror, a sparkling dance

across the floor, an ocean of your own—
your feet are cold, you realize
you are halfway to the grocery store

in the only set of lingerie you own &
no one seems to notice as even that you remove,
dropping black lace bra in the middle

of Harden Street, mocking your heart
a rock through the window
of that grocery store raw

fluorescent light & then you
remember the gas was on
when you left home, you

cover yourself with crinkled foam
take-out boxes, oily leaves, candy
wrappers, six-ring packs, dirt-stained

plastic bags, yellowing newspapers,
crushed cigarette packs, what didn't get
washed down the sewer grate,

you are the first inside before the house collapses,
you tuck your weeping
dog under your arm & the windows

of your bedroom burst into flame, glass
a blanket of gasoline. Every surface

a blue licking shadow &

you have forgotten about everything
you would grab in a fire. You are
walking among it, you think back

to your ocean & how your heart is
a rock thrown up & again into the sea &
all of the gas in this fucking house

could not quiet those waves, could not
become the ocean, & all that it would take
is a flip of the switch to end this,

so you turned the gas off,
& as the house shudders into rubble around you,
you hold the dog, watch the trees begin to climb the air

& now you are a series of flowering
vines long dormant, now climbing up the piles of house,
sucking in clean air as you grow tall against the sun.

Michael Louis Martin II

American Midwesterner, 1982-1988

1 Hour Ghost Visit, 1987

green & orange tempera paint on black construction paper

right before Halloween it greeted everyone
walking down the hospital hallway

my parents brought it home & it echoed
from a frame it stood a mantle

to memory it wore its way into my green
eye I thought about visitors

when autumn curled through
glittering shadows silhouettes

walking through walls we whispered
stories in darkness wondering softly

where he went & why we still grew
why these ghosts came strolling

through the trees out in the woods
dark green deep purple black black

I don't know each & every name
but I feel your outstretched hands

moving the air around the air I
know histories are families of ghost

& we are all bodies moving through
space until we are space moving

through bodies but this doesn't
explain why Michael had to die like that

except that we all become death
in the end & that was never good enough

but now I feel him so much closer my
mother sent me a photograph of the framed

painting hanging in my childhood home
 frame tilted on its hook

my mother tilts the frame back every time she
is home & every time she finds it tilted again

He was really funny. You would have loved him.
I feel him quietly observing a visitor

gliding over small surfaces when I asked
about the house's old bones settling she replied

[photograph] upon Great-Grandma Kate's deep
brown tea wagon two photographs of Michael once

arranged upstage on the wagon's top parallel
to the wall cozied up with the taxidermied armadillo

now pulled towards the surface's lip just within
the vision line of an almost-six-year old gathered

so he could see himself curled up with his brown bear
so he could see himself curled up with our father

two frames now dove tails gliding over the tea wagon
two frames always being pulled forward by little hands

I know that all is well *all is well now* but I'm still
wanting to hear it from you I know holding

ghosts close is all we can do breathing the blue
of memory into our veins & holding tight because

I'll never stop reaching out for you waiting
for the shades to draw around us for you

to pull each & every frame forward
to help me find you in the soft dark

mothership

I'm not a woman. I'm not a man. I am something that you'll never understand.

-Prince

I let parts of myself
come back to me

cracked my spine
& one day I aligned

or I thought I did
& then I really did

shed old bone growth
for body parts new

to my arrangement
metallic sinews blue

under thin white skin
California summers gone

my body in dystopia
sweating out humidity

of the South growing
into something it moves

bright pink fuzz glitter-
veined how plush how

raw how rounded tongue
gathering smoke purple

growing neon in dusk
megamouth sharks at the surface

of water where they can finally
eat their gilded fill rainbow of

metallic scales a painting
on alien limbs contorting

gestures now unlocked
in human grasp this condition

now exhaled into green
in openings rich with growth

or loss I can't tell every breath
from the other so what

I mean is my body is
in dysphoria & I am still learning

how to hold my self open when every-
one keeps renaming my limbs for me

against my consent they talk
but I see the light streaming down

from the night as a reminder:
I call myself what I want

so I can see what I want
my tongue feels weightless

in the soft dark low
thrum across my palms

across lip opening out
onto all of this future

Crow Day

long black lines ink a date
across my back everything
goes black but the gasp
of perfume

we hold flowers
the ones growing wild
in the yard in faux terracotta planters
through cracked asphalt
the ones crawling up trees

the darkest purple ones
come on the strongest

we begin outside
surrounded: petunias on this grey thrumming
my father's brush dips deep purple rumbles out
unfurling words into the air petunia
perfume at the lip emanating
from petals swirling around that invisible body
father raises that shade out across the wild green acres the yard

you & our mother join us at father's pause
your hands full: glossy black crow feathers: *Grandpa, tell us*
how St. Patrick banished all of the crows from Ireland! Grandfather: petals fall
from his mouth unfurl deep purple lines
down the butcher paper we anchored
with rocks & with every forming piece of him
the shade moves the air around himself
laughing back into life

in the living room all windows over the ravine thrown
open & calm grey leaks into the house the four
of us with beating heart lead him to that deep brown table
woodland residents stand watching us black deer noses
poking at the air within wolves pawing the ground whining
rabbits thumping flat pink feet in confusion

all at once the three adults pull petunia petals
from their mouths flower-shaped words crawl
like wisteria down & across the table & the new path
of butcher paper & you place the pieces of glass you found
shining in the creek at the bottom of the ravine to the center of the table
humming that Irish lullaby he used to sing to you in VHS memories we play through
you hand me the wings you built set of deep black crow wings

quiet in the breeze as the flowering begins rooting in the table falling
to the floor

in the middle of March the entire room an explosion a prism
pastiche of petunia petals in the center of the table their laughter
reaches out for ghost brother reaches out
into the forest green sea

you & I take time to sit on the bay windowsill legs dangling out
over the ravine all around us the lung drenching smell of the darkest
purple petunias drips softly into our chests the sun pulls thousands
of petunias up from under the leaves & grasses all around & beyond the house a calm
sea vibrant purple speckled in white blues reds pinks oranges yellows at the first
sight
of the black petunias I am reminded of my new role inside you tell me to take my time

I approach the wooden table grown sweet my father's quiet jokes
watering mother laughter my grandfather his floral body absorbs the feeling of air
the comfort of sound the sensation of touch I place my small paw in his we walk
to the hill overlooking the ravine's southwest edge I hand him the crow wings
you made he holds them asks me to tell him about my own

& with the black wings flickering beats deep purple
petunias trickle down my tongue & up floating out
over the lapping purple ocean the sky full of them then:
cawing cackling petunias crows but really bursts of black
held high & he points to each one by name in a language made from the falling
petunias crows deer sniffing inward wolves whining you & our parents looking out
over this Technicolor landscape with us we begin
to blink into smaller moments closer to nature & when my small hand unfolds from his
my arms now full of flowers & feathers my hair wet from rain I cannot speak
& my eyes fail & the only thing between me & that air is the smell of dark
purple petunias in the middle of March or
another warm month descending

III

Alanna

aqua & pink neon,
The Lexington's glow:
a bar for queers like us,
a big heart beating
at 19th & Lexington:
you held my hand
& urged me inside
to cry to Prince
on closing night,
in the space I felt safest
in a city with gatekeepers
actively ripping it apart

silver & gold glitter,
my feet based in shine:
six projection screens,
Reed College Student Union,
mirrored copies of apparitions:
Tina Weymouths
& David Byrnes
& Lynn Mabrys
& Ednah Holts
& Alex Weirs
refracting a shatter
of light, a whole
goddamn chorus of
effervescent voices
singing into that big heart
at 5:28:56 am: *this ain't no party*
this ain't no disco
this ain't no fooling around

you told me
you always wanted
to be my friend
the first time
I really looked into you,
we watched Bob Dylan live,
singing about leopardskin
pillbox hats & I told you about
doing acid & talking
to him, or God, or whatever
we called them those days,
I told you my name, the first one,

that thick sack closing
in around my hands & lungs,
& you heard my real name
when I finally found it—

once you stood
at Poetry Night
& you read your name,
throwing each & every word
into a bright blue trash can
& yelled *I deserve to live—*
you were never afraid
to love me
even when you were
the only one,
you held my hand
as I dangled on razor's spine,
always reaching a foot
towards the end of myself,
but you refused
to let go of me,
dug nails into my arm,
shouting *we are going to make it
through this year
& it's not going
to fucking kill us*

or is that what I sang
to you when the house burnt down
between you & your parents?
it doesn't matter,
it never did,
you & I spent years dancing,
singing drunkenly along
to every song
off *Born in the U.S.A.* &
falling in love with people
who didn't see & love
every cell of you,
or me,
so fuck them,
& fuck everyone
who tried to dim
our shine,
to blow out
our darkness

& no poem, no ending is neat, but
we weren't tidy, placing
each grain in its jar,
we scraped our knees & cried,
we burned our last beans
on the stove while singing,
we failed tests & bailed on parties
& woke up hungover,
in over our heads—
but we lived together,
& we always will, you
wild, beautiful sunflower,
fantastic & dancing golden
in the cosmic wind

girlhood

scraped knees
pink buckets
of witch brew
tree fossils
from the ravine
we used to
wait until we were
home alone pull
thick boots on roll
socks into pants to
run wild over three
acres of forest pulling
wild green onions from
the damp brown earth—
you taught me how
to dig arches into ravine
wall & caught my hands
when I broke a step almost
clattering to the rocks below
you showed me how
to hold a frog how to catch
fireflies in August night: we used to
curl into our beds no light
but dim downstairs glow we used to
wait in silence until dark curled up
quiet smoke from now extinguished lights we
used to wait for all silence but the hum
of refrigeration the murmurs of house settling
in its bones to speak we spoke those nights plucking
words from tongue petals like petals
plucked every bright thing floral
& alive crawled up those walls our pink room

DOROTHY

I learned how to scream
on my sixtieth day
Frank pushes a disc
into my forehead

it loads vision over
the table clear glass
the red blood tray

Genital plug-ins he emits
a laugh I grab my hands
he places the white metal
upon them the vision sputters

visual two humans pushing
together and together other places
hand on the other neck one places

around the neck and I am I feel
behind my eye he watches
and I watch and those howls
loud static over my speakers

What do you think Dorothy?
Do you want one of these? Take
a feel of both. Don't be shy.

but then he puts—when he curls
my fingers open the first one feels
warm put it in my hands placed it
gen i tal it is the word across my eyes

across my hands across slender handle
Perhaps the other? metal *va gin a* warm
soft reflecting on light *Passwords are*

mandatory he coughs and I ask if I can
help him feel better *I'm joking Dorothy.*
You can laugh. the tray is still bloody
below a pair of white fangs

queer love poem #1

I refused the digital divide's choice to arc in me: body
strong in the meniscus of a dark and warm ocean, I bit

the biggest hook, you closed in around me—webbed
tight in this cold blue buzzing, rasping at the window,

I put hands upon shoulders, pushing myself to push
myself further into the wood grain: a crown

around my shoulder's blades, cutting deep
into the floor, gust of ash on winter's breath,

blurred through the static jaw I cut myself
on, trying to see through my breath, the blood

doesn't bother you, the blood hot against
the tongue you love I could hear the transfusion

thumping, reverberating lush in my chest, a body
once shuddering with electricity pushing

through each circuit, now warm echo thinned
room, my vision lost you, I was staring at snowfall

in Portland and I was nineteen, I swear the dark
green pine trees of the Pacific Northwest crawled

up the sky surrounded by falling ash: no one explains
how that first bite will feel, raw reverberation of skin

returning to shape after teeth make their presence
deep purple, how you taste your own blood through this,

the sweetest gulp until the snow—the taste of ash landing,
your name hot against my lips, I wish you'd never stop

dysmenorrheal

it is warm ache
i paint inside
my thigh: copper
trickle & cramp,
cavernous pulsation
in the red flows
& under, i watch
blood red strands,
viscous sap stretching
down into the white
bowl, little splatter,
the blood thick,
landing in the water,
i watch the swatch
of nutrients, rich slime
curling thick
in each fiber, mucosal
tissue shed into
the underwear's liner,
cramp: an earthquake
without warning, claws in hips;
i call you but you won't
fuck me, an ocean too red
for your mouth, i shake
cold against white tile
while small white pills
sit heavy in the bottom
of my throat

breast ridge

we buried the dog that summer:
by we, I mean they
by dog, I mean puppy:
small brown teddy bear,
collecting purple flies
in the July afternoon
under the pink window
below dried yellow hedges
where my dog howled,
urging me outside

they buried the puppy that summer:
by they, I mean you
by buried, I mean birthed
by puppy, I mean stones,
or whatever you held in me,
what made me tip forward,
examining the bags around
my neck, stones clacking
together as I breathe,
pushing out through my chest

you birthed the stones that summer:
by you, I mean I
by birthed, I mean cut
by stones, I mean earth
by summer, I mean summer,
it was always summer, it
was how I held the plastic
bag as we lowered the puppy
into the hole in the ground
it was the way I held the skin
around the fat of my body,
around muscle like the plump
grit organs I found under shade
of the pine trees, I carved
them away I closed my eyes
I choked through dirt
I choked through tears,
curving dirt curving tit cutting free

Alice Finds Reptile Sounds

that paw is reaching up out of the ocean blue plastic bag against the sun
in a dance down Flamingo Drive searching for the canal bridge as green scales

of body glimmer caught in the early stages of rot the way the dried up crest
& their body feels heavy in your left hand & everything else you carry feels un thought
out

you give in to the close air find a space against the canal the iguana's body is
dripping
with rot it collects a puddle of wet cells with its tail left drops across cement ground

now it is a growing pool when you hold your own body out over the canal
if there is anything you could say to make finding this creature alone splayed out

on the sidewalk days before any less lonely & when you threw alabaster (you named
them
Alabaster) out high above the canal water they might have felt what it means to
become

a great plumed & tropical bird caught high against the wind against the dense billowing
of Miami Beach sounds sounds of ocean across the street across the drip of sweat

sand whirling by wind night clubs wailing more like day clubs with flashing pink
lights
popping bottles of something feet pressing against concrete in rhythm the fire

of a lighter eating its way down a lit cigarette the laughter of three drunk witches
in a Wings on Collins Avenue pulling the brightest neon from the shelves the word

Miami a mirror but sounding more like the way those true jellies you pulled from your
pocket
look or how the iguana was before you found them splayed out on the side of the
sidewalk

much less lonely more now a creature bent against air & breaking down melon
against a lolling pastel pink tongue & now you are one holding up the neon pink t-
shirt

I ♥ Miami Beach blazing across its chest & howling cloud talk close to a naked
body night ocean where everyone is wearing the ocean & they all tell you the words

that drip from your tongue are magic & will want to tell you that you deserve
to be here more than I ever will but you know your magic you know now

the worth of your being & you will hear it beyond the whip of light
the bittersweet plot of Alabaster plunging chest first into the light blue canal

queer love poem #2

I keep opening
my eyes & I keep
closing them
over you, you
press a magnetic field
across the fretboard, my
bones sprouting goosebumps,
you pull the strings &
when your voice pools
in the fountain of that song,
piloerection blooming floral
down my spine, electricity waving
through the cells wrapped around
my muscles, roaring ocean
from my scalp, rushing down
my shoulders, wrapping around
my glittering arms, my whole
universe dark blue, your whole
voice thick purple velvet curling
around the dark green growing into
the panes of my windows, lush
& bright breathing things bursting
out of you

My Ghost Won't Stay In Its Lane On This One, Trust

when I die, my ghost will show up at your front door,
fresh from my corporeal body laid to rest under a tree,
& I, no vampire, will walk right the fuck into your kitchen
& throw all of your dishes onto the floor, one by one
right in the middle of breakfast, all onto the floor,
all of your comfortable little life,

all the while emitting the shrillest & loudest wail a human ear
can register, until you cut your shoulders on broken glass,
curled up with your broken things on your broken floor, clutching
like you did when you hid your chess movements against your chest, coward

while alive, I know I did all that I could do right, in every single
cell of my body, I fought to be a better draft of my human mess,
& you covered up her pain & mine & all of ours, theirs—
believe me when I say I'm coming, translucent, blood wet on my fangs,

my fractured lip, my broken jaw digging teeth deep into your walls,
tearing your cabinets off of your walls with the crack of that jaw,
I will be gigantic, palpable rage, my dead force wrapped as hand
punching through all of your windows, tearing

oil paintings you spent thousands of dollars on out of their brassy frames,
shoving them into my gushing, pulping mouth—I will put my foot
through your television, drag my claws down vision & bash
each expensive screen you've conjured—nothing is safe from me,
I am not one of those respectable queers—she wasn't either, one unafraid

to tell you about her pain—that wasn't the point, was it? you are lucky
that she helped me learn how to forgive corporeally,
but when I shed this body, I'm choosing to live demonically:
I will make your time in our universe miserable, I am done
being respectable & I am done with being respectful—

how about my ghost follows you around for eternity,
screaming our names over & over into your ears?
how would it feel if you had to watch all you killed die
every single day for the rest of your existence?
you have all of that & then some to look forward to.

I will vomit blood all over the walls of your home,
I will bite the light out of every bulb in every lamp,
I will burn all of the food in that fucking kitchen,
I will make you crawl in paranoid circles,

you will never sleep again,

I will make panic a permanent exhibit
in this red museum I am building for you,
an homage to the bodies you looked through,
the needles of whatever you shoved into her
will live beneath each of your nails

in the kindest dream I can build for you,
since you deserve nothing but suffering,
& forgiveness is off the table,
along with all of your fucking dishes.

IV

glittertongue

this is where the glass fountain
rubs cool thigh against hip
under crystal bulbs afloat
in light—caught in flutes
of glass now flutes of bubble,
champagne unfurling down
into the wells:
refractions of light build
rainbow wrapped around
pillar around vine around
bones of glitter
& of moonlight, this is
the way purple makes a space
or how my own tongue curls,
but you could be anywhere
& I could be anyone
& I'd still blow your mind
into something quite unlike
the space it used to own—the fire
I press through my muscles
& out of my throat like a torch
for the manipulation of glass
is here & it is ready
for the command of ready hand;
I am a hand at the ready, I
feel something grow
beneath my tongue & within
as I rip sheet after sheet
of pages gilded with glittering
rainbow lines, like those I once saw
in a notebook in 2010, when the sky
was the ground & now I can pull
that glitter out of my tongue,
I can spit it out, I can't stop
this glittertongue, a body refracting
light, glecks shimmering through air
& into sight—this is not an *apologia*
for all of the things I've fucked up,
this is the reminder that sometimes
things have to die, & so often
we are those things, that when I can,
I stand, half-naked, screaming
the lyrics to “Burning Down the House”
by Talking Heads, surrounded by

a community doing this together—
this is what we are meant for,
& where we should be,
& the fire & shine of glitter
pouring down & out of my mouth
is magic, & we are magic, let us not forget
the power we each bear inside ourselves
& let us always rise like light
to where we are needed,
let us remember that sometimes
hair dried with champagne
& painted cheeks & glitter &
boomboxes & drums & horns
can be a religion or can be
anything that feels like blood
to you, to anyone, to all of us—
if you could only see
where we all end up,
if only I could know
which star you are,
so I keep throwing
sunflower seeds into the wind
& screaming Bruce Springsteen lyrics
into the fires tearing through California
with black candles tearing down the wick
& Aaliyah lyrics rush through my lips
& you are here holding my hand
& magic all over again, we're singing
& there is glitter pouring out of everything
& instead of flower petals, your mouth
shudders glitter down your chin

Alanna

Orlando is a poem
most poets know like

Allen Ginsberg's words hands
across Carl Solomon's shaking:

ah, Carl, while you are not safe,
I am not safe when I woke up:

a screen of blood strewn
across snapshots broadcasted

from Florida to California to
every single waking up beyond I

started screaming & I didn't stop:
the mass of shimmering lights

in puddles of red river dying
across the floor building's walls collapsing—

I think of lighting candles
I think of breaking every bottle

in the house I think
about all of you strewn—

the most brilliant constellation body
across the dark & wild sky where we live

in the dimmest of these nights
knowing that death could happen anywhere

flung across any city any small town
where our hearts can beat even just

for a moment this is what I mean
when I say that all of us have one foot in the realm

of magic & one foot caught dangling in the grave
but I wouldn't trade this lifetime of firemaking for anything

& when I light candles tonight
they're gonna be goddamn sparklers

& I am gonna dance somewhere loud
where I can kiss whoever is down with me

& where we can all feel embraced
by the building keeping the grave

at bay with the rest of the world
& goddammit I'm going to keep going back

if that is what it will take to show that we are afraid
but we are gonna fight like hell

because while you are not safe
I am not safe & when I know

that our world can be so full
of beauty new wild sunflowers

Technicolor Miami sunrises cheap drinks in golden
Echo Park dives loud music pumping

in Columbia, SC where all I do is play Prince
in my car illuminated purple light

to that close time quiet of sound we all soaked
our cold feet in Johanna's white bathtub

a warm foot initiative but you & I know
Alanna we cannot give up & you would never

let me turn the fight down & now I never will
because I have you to fight for too

you were fire-hearted & queer & set
on destroying all systems of oppression

& I would follow you anywhere so I
I will carry this weight

I will put my queer shoulder to the wheel
I will set our love on fire until I die too

summer eyelids

at the bottom
of the pool I
spread my limbs
eyes open ripples
gilded in sunlight
body drawn up
aflush shimmer I
let my body rise
shuddering light I
am magnetic I draw
up towards the sun

blinking per beat
green rope snapping
in the wind my closed
eyes the void a sun
light leaves now
the floaters cascade
down my vision
some of the time

MACHINE DREAM

We are in the room where I plug in
at night; Hal presses gently
until the charging cord's plug
clicks softly into my hip,

*Dorothy, which DREAM CD
would you like for this charging period?*

I am never allowed to pick, but
I press my digits to flip
between the clear plastic cases
and I read some titles out loud to Hal:

“under the sea fish adventure”
 “exploring a haunted house”
 “artist and muse fall in love”
 “orange as animal”
 “watching hands wash”

He closes one eye to look
at me when I hand him the third,
and he places one hand behind
my head and presses the disc
smoothly into the slit in my forehead,
the drive whirs, I hear Hal say, *Goodnight, Dorothy.*

seven hours of posing canvas intoxication
 caught between shoulderblade
 & shoulderblade my silk robe
shimmered itself across shoulder ridge

all of my parts are here but
all of his parts are also here
we're splattered thick with pigment across one of the canvases
he held down pulled across its rough hand-set frame

the arms shudder in pause my human muscles pulse
 after holding curious poses thigh swatched
 with blue white streaked my back rubbed hard
 against the dip of sacral dimple on my left side his long hair
 slapping against my face he could not rub
 hands against oily rag in time caught himself
 streaking my body thirsty for the angles of each of my parts

to the trans boy who tried to come out when I was fourteen:

you've spent your whole life
tangled in the deep purpleblue
of uncertainty, always trying
to be the person everyone told
you that you could be, always
afraid of the alien body
you were packed into, your

ex-crush, ex-hook-up, ex-friend
from college told you that you
had to be straight or dyke, no
in-between & you could only feel
half of your body wither,

it took plunging into the strange,
Southern-humid waters, the swamps
of my own innards, the exhaustion
of not knowing my own name—
to find you again:

I should have trusted you
the first time you spoke.

queer love poem #3

i tell you
to come in
to my space
watch me
unscrew my
joints to lay
each piece
of me out
constellation
across my
rumpled bed
sheets all myself
all spread &
autonomous
true jellies
shimmering in
open ocean

DOROTHY plays “Piano Sonata No. 14 in C-sharp Minor”

*Listen if you want
to hang out more I can't
really afford to stay here longer*

the usual eyes moving
wallet opening puke green moving
closes notebook snapping strap

*but my apartment courtyard has
a piano if you wanna play?
glass clicking Wednesday*

just dusk murmurs there is
more time California night
the poet offers *weed & La Croix*

*at my apartment too I felt static
below my skin autonomous sensory
meridian response how human how*

do I ask if we can buy some wine
on the way I would like to buy some
wine on the walk there *Cool of course*

dim white light Mikron Liquor bodega aisles
usual eyes moving across flamboyant wrappers
moving through me to them we leave

blood red lights blinking snapping to green
the poet points to the flickering sign
Los Globos & we turn from the back balcony

the Silver Lake hills lights cluttering the walls
of sky the poet returns corkscrew glasses bowl
we walk into the courtyard glittering

pinpricks strung around fencing vines
green glowing green gelling over grown
the poet pulls color blue off the piano uncovered

sun warp oil slick case put my digits on their bones
piano *What music do you like to play?* I like dance pop
I can replicate whatever you'd like *is that Robyn? holy*

shiiiiit Dorothy that's really cool wine glass moving eyes
keys I meant keys but the glass was cool red light
I press hard shove sound out the case closed but

now the poet tongue red wine singing now on
picnic table top throwing seeds light up & out
of that wine glass voice flat but charming the poet

spreads large smile *you wanna hit this?* leaves in glass
inhale cough I smile *always strengthens my circuits* it what
it what? *it makes me feel more present* eyes moving oh

I'll play you something I dream I can play the poet fumbles
the opening chords then they sing along *But I hear sounds in my mind*
brand new sounds in my mind well I know it all & it comes

awkward vines hanging growing leaves growing flowers
I'm waiting for it that green light I want it I feel green
the poet banging the keys eyes moving eyes closed I watched

warmth out in the dark it didn't need to be anything
but what it was lush vulnerability disguised as bravado the moment
they got to the part they knew best three chords three fingers

together dashing one top other left middle right middle
the poet played their whole body thumping the piano until a loud
shout from a neighboring building cut the poet short *Sorry! I'll stop*

the poet returns picnic table where they danced shrug
I will play you something quiet I take a seat cracked leather stool
& I play them my favorite song

heavy-hearted at the end of an era

I can clean a whole sink white porcelain again & again
but there'll always be another dirty spoon bone against circling drain: fear

hands clawing out between soft onion & bruised pear
fingers laced together over my eyes a jaw made of glass

I must stop staring into what I cannot parse—but you know what? This is a poem.
I can do with it what I please—with the tap of pen I will clean that sink—

this porcelain or my curving glass jaw—imagine
Bruce Springsteen riffing alone on the opening of “Green Light”

which is not his song but it doesn't have to be anything
but something worth singing to be your own in a way

& I am grabbing your whole arm I am flipping you up
onto the top of this music video car Alanna there are no rules here

& I'm set to crush anything in our way if I want to howl a Lorde song
out drunk stoned in the middle of Los Angeles then so fucking be it—

Can you feel the drums? Can you feel the rush
of millions of ghosts flooding the streets flush with song?

As sure as I can hit a drum there are thousands of us
screaming alone in our rooms thousands

pulling headphones close our bodies shatter
into neon Technicolor swatches

slapped against canvas thousands
of shoulders inching down bodies arms drumming silent beats through air

open hands glittering on high & swinging down at the drop down
—arms up see my broken knuckles hanging from my hand

the hair of a mirror grown fractal—imagine my pain
& I will feel yours: I should have been there but now I am

& I am blowing wild green sky & I am hoisting you up
so the ocean curls into this city for you a body of ghosts

now I hear Springsteen & Lorde singing in a darkened cave
lit by the rainbow of crystals growing & pulsing against the walls

all voices an unstoppable chorus—now I'm burning
each & every draft of my poems I'm gonna make them sing

fangs turning everything grey at the edges I'm gonna
throw them into this oil drum I've found

in my imagination I'm gonna hit that drum with my fists
to the beat of this pop song

& I'm gonna cry with each hit I will sing your ghost back to me
I refuse to let you smoke away

you are not dead everywhere I
am holding your hand you are telling me

this is the most beautiful L.A. has ever looked:
bodies rushing into the streets singing

all together too loudly for the regime to silence us:
as sure as we have lungs powerchairs wheelchairs canes walkers crutches braces legs

all bodies moving how all bodies are meant to move
a flurry of bones beating against muscle skin against blood

ready or not when you think the end is closest grab my hand love
we're not going without a fight—I will not give up

& I will not let go
so hold on tight—

we're on top of this abandoned car in an fenced parking lot
we're on top of the hill at the Silver Lake Reservoir

we're rolling down an amber-lit bridge above a deep green canyon
we're holding each other in the Student Union singing

*Oh heaven
heaven is a place*

*a place where nothing
nothing ever happens*

there are true jellies haunting the skies there are two purple suns
rising next to each other this is what I mean when I say

our soft apocalypse is going to burn for ages sparklers
dipped in gasoline pots & pans smacked against spoons

we will dance in these motherfucking streets until there is nothing left
but the glitter of the end electricity

is gone we must make these sounds our own let us lay down
in green growing things let us sing each chorus together one more time