

Pastoral Brutalism

Remember when I scooped out a hundred caves and planted
thunder?

Remember when the Redwoods grew and grew until we arrived
and burned them down with our venomous spit?

You're showing me photos of abandoned buildings, walls climbing
with ivy, rusted gurneys, dirt that is haunted

They are mirrors of my ribs, cracked open, showing my house of
failures, shy Juncos in the stairwell nibbling on seeds of bad ideas

Remember the little one stomping through puddles to see where
the water would go?

There was an old car in Mr. Sawyer's backyard, tall grass that
grew every spring and pushed out through the smashed windows,
and it lived there until he died.

I don't think I would need blood in my veins if I could somatically
take in animal sounds the way the poet described.

Do you remember when I put my face against the muzzle of a
horse and imitated its breath with my nose and it replied pushing
its mouth on my cheek?

He told me yesterday he thought of us as gods, and I told him I was
sure we would have merged by now or that maybe we had.

I recognize myself when I imagine it.

On a Wednesday

if you stand too close
the heat in your ileum pushes out,
singeing the corners of your mouth
everyone says not to look into the sun
but the slow burn breathes
like the thick paper you couldn't set on fire
no matter how many times you held a lighter to it
burning the pad of your index finger
because you didn't have a zippo
but you had a sick fascination with twirling the thread
until it wrapped itself around your intestines
blocking off all the voices
that told you to feel it not feed it
but it's so hungry
and when you see tears, you have tears
and then everyone is crying on a Wednesday
through all the sterile conversations
that mean nothing
that mean everything
that change your blood from red to gray
pumping bellows
pushing the edges
finally igniting it
setting you on fire
the scream that comes out scares even you

a thin slice of silence

This morning I used yarrow to extract truth from the hovering fog thick with bird voices. I ran under a murder of ravens, not privy to my own tell-tale tail feathers, signs of belonging somewhere without being common

I've been staring into the red votive glass on my altar every day, inhaling the satisfying sting of sage, wanting to live there. I wish I could find religion in the flickers and smoke, crawl inside to see how it works

I wish I could become a minnow in the river, see the bottom where my feet might plant themselves, find roots of an invasive sort where I can wander across and over, always knowing where I started. I wish I could live on the edge without being in it, where my belly can safely be soft and tender.

When I was little, it didn't occur to me that water birds had legs. They were magic, floated home without struggle. Every time I see animals I cry lately because when we make eye contact, I find redemption. Last night I saw a deer with caramel fur, I woke up with dream sand on my fingers.