

## A SEA

It was a sea at my feet. A sea of remembering. A sea that, even now, years later, does not let me forget that I am a creature who was fashioned in a warm thought and will therefore always yearn to return to one. The waves washed over the cars on the street, the light was wet on my hands where I sat on the front steps, expecting things to be different, and by different I mean acknowledged. The dreams in the other houses on the block looked at me through windows, they shook their rattles at me, *look away, look away*, I felt their regrets glide across my hair like goldfish. And then the world washed up onto the sidewalk, purple and lost were the clouds over it, lonely was its skeleton, lonely was the seaweed that held it. Or perhaps all of that happened, maybe it happened while I was looking the other way, toward the sun, the one that was slipping over its fire, the one that was slowly giving up its moon. What an uncruel moon it was.

## THE STAIRCASE

In the night, the staircase. I was writing about the staircase when a teacher called my father and told him I wanted to commit suicide. Night was still whole then, and big enough for a staircase. It led to the stars, or so I wrote, and the stars were still close by and even closer with colors, to be near them on the staircase was to understand them as voices that wanted to say so much. When my father confronted me I felt like secrets had been stolen from both of us, and that I had no business working or writing away from unhappiness. The space on the page that the staircase made crumbled, I would have to build it all over again. He cried, my father, and I cried in response, in surprise, I was stolen, I was threatened by a splintering of night, I did not know if that was also so for my father. Each disappearance of myself a grief for him. And I had disappeared so much. What else of that time, spring, rain, exhale. Abstract thought was sinking away and the idea, no, the insistence of what cried itself real was immanent, was sitting in the living room chair waiting for me to go back upstairs, waiting for me to return to the page on which I had constructed a staircase to bright neighborhoods of stars and the blue that held them, held me, to see if I still recognized it.

## VESPERS

*for david*

The boy I am in my dreams is in love with bees. To turn your work into honey, that rich, enduring burn. One night the boy who is me could not sleep, we waited until every star slipped into slumber to wander around the house. *Preserve us, Lord, preserve us in the honey*, we whispered in the darkness bowed away from Jerusalem.

This boy I was, or am, we fingerprint with so much water that the street becomes a river. Sometimes we fly over the alley behind his house, sometimes the water is up to our thighs. We clutch fans of leaves. We place them, one by one, on a large rock until they braid a ribbon of green. This boy is made of yellow and black flowers that rest on a cheek, a desk, a puddle in the rain. He is beautiful, especially in that dark and full way. The water brings to us visions of lotus-worlds and we let the leaves go, we give them back to the water, we think about the dream we were that started everything.

We awoke in a sway of darkness. *O five-pointed star that is the body, I have been here a long time*, sayeth the soul. We stand, we read in the dark, we cross something out in the dark, we walk to the window to see another of our worlds and then turn to the mirror. The darkness of the room is now waves, waves muscular and fathomless. They engulf our shoulders and hair, we are pulled down. We close our eyes. We offer ourselves up.