

## Pandemic Days and Nights: Nocturne

### Aubade

It rained all day. I was tested because we attended  
a funeral for a boy who hanged himself in the American beeches.  
Each of these nights I've been releasing ravens,  
throwing them like knives at this caliginous vigil.  
Shadows grow the way age makes you  
more than you were when you were young

we were young & alive years ago all gold-burned  
glow documenting our  
linger but here we are 20 years side-by-side  
glasses & oversized  
t-shirt asleep on your left side & me awake by  
chance thinking through 40 years of breath  
trying to track back to an earlier dark  
we hide still here in our mortgaged heaven  
the winged begin their song I hug myself to you &  
wonder who we hide from

we hide from pines weaponizing into giant  
arrowheads before cut scene  
the air is still full of our great disease of our violet rust  
our chorus of coming apart new studies show  
we're all getting divorced hanging ourselves  
abandoning our children the dark is other people  
or nothing the nothing is hugging the windchimes  
now filling the mailbox with needles I do love you  
dear but I can't find you in all this universe  
vis a vis a sound I heard  
the hospitals  
are filling with lungs that can't perform we know a thing  
aristotle says by what it's for look at yourself looking  
for a horizon in the black you poor monologue  
coughing into gloom

*coughing, is it wrong  
to want this minute's witchy innards displayed in  
shorthand to all at once read its code  
like seeing within a geode's origin story the  
morning is excessive  
after the insular night  
where I'm from everyone's fucked only  
avatars exist*

*how transparent am I when I weep  
these keepsakes? whatever I'm a tired  
narration I trademarked the allure you  
see here  
morning's crass streamers of light transmit  
notifications rivalrous gifs appear to catch  
at the heart a thing of mourning  
like an heirloom sequestered for centuries after the  
war*

War nostalgia breeds incessant fireworks tonight  
reminds me we once went to a concert  
on a small river island, the crowd purpled  
with stage light & plosive riffs. Quiet skiffs  
sleeked by. Neighborhood houses breathed  
darkly. In the throes of a solo, I felt. The world  
wouldn't last long.

"It won't last long," I thought you said,  
& "I'll only love you if you're  
quiet." I'm awake in the fingertrap morning in  
Syracuse at 9am on a Friday reading that Ashbery  
said what we require  
is surprise. So I covet a different discourse, a  
coronation of notification lifting me toward.  
That's what I call romance. That's  
what I crawl into morning with. Text me the  
transcript. Share me like a shot of mood ring. Take  
me with you to the plaque commemorating the last  
normal day the day broke.

Broke, we're at the sunset drive-in to wonder  
who will make the estate / last? men  
as weakness / a pasture of sacrifice / as if volunteering  
pain necessitates reward / like digging a grave  
deep to find a heaven to enter / a world of gods  
with eternal emotions / this is a move toward  
the personal / my wife is appreciating  
the impatiens / what is it to be a museum?  
a statue? the farm / horses eat hay slowly  
& have their own method / of knowing  
what time it is / what it's time for / beer works  
by drying you with poison / the farmer's kids walk  
the cows into their stalls / I think about the difference  
between history & imagination / little gods explode  
into leaf & we eat them until we can't feel.

Feel? Never have I ever felt anything  
that wasn't staged. This whole postpartum summer,  
what am I / missing? For example, an agrarian  
enjoyment of sunrise? The right champagne? I am  
what I've bought. Self-portrait / with inground  
pool & underwater / disco light. How the  
antidepressants lurk / in the guarded part of the  
pharmacy while the 12.99 30-pack of Genesee is  
freely / afloat in the aisle. I haven't taken the trash  
out in years. Is art just / the word for sale of self?  
Thank you / for your honesty. Look at all that magic  
/ water cycling through the filter.

Through the filter, we heard the news of car thieves  
this evening / under the legislation of fireworks  
& blood & a country's shudder. It dogs me  
to know / every part of my nightmare / is me.  
In some versions  
of tonight / a man trips a motion-activated alarm  
&, spooked, shoots me dead when I run out  
to scare him off. / The dog shakes & pisses  
as the aesthetic bombs go off--war play to celebrate  
the way we ripped / ourselves from false  
gods across the sea. See, there are many  
in other versions of this night shot / in mantic prayer,  
their swollen eyes near shut trying to find the end of a dark religion.

The darkly religious comfort of experiments is /  
they're repeatable.  
A comfort, this morning coming / over & over. The  
moment of its / lasting.

What's the last sense / that can't be settled  
into sleep? The tomorrows / are congealed now,  
a lava / around which I write eyeliner secrets.  
Mostly, I want / to be caught,  
rent-due in the rain, & told / it's over,  
I can drop / my keys & phone, I can quit / the cult  
of critique in this garrison town.  
But "it's time to / get back out there," the night always says,  
even though it's sick / with provisions, kingless  
& crowdsourced, so I slip on my my ancient  
crown & ride it.

I ride & ricochet too often to be whole / to be the  
kind of holy person who wakes for sunrise / whose  
eyes are permitted / to see the blessings. Because  
the dog too eschewed / daybreak in the wake of last  
night's worthy worries & we spooned / til 10 AM,  
all fur & breath & shaken valance / of apocalypse.  
Sleeping in is political, reflective, post-happiness /  
in a dawnless morning, the tyranny that follows.