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## Moon Called Her Visage Woman

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MOON CALLED HER

VISAGE WOMAN

by

Ann Michelle Villanueva

Bachelor of Arts in English and Political Science

Mercer University

1992

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the

Master of Fine Arts - Creative Writing

Department of English

College of Liberal Arts

The Graduate College

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

May 2015

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We recommend the thesis prepared under our supervision by

**Ann Michelle Villanueva**

entitled

**Moon Called Her Visage Woman**

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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**Department of English**

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May 2015

ABSTRACT

**Moon Called Her Visage Woman**

by

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*Moon Called Her Visage Woman* is a thesis-length collection of poetry submitted in fulfillment of the MFA program in Creative Writing. It is comprised of short poems, generally thirty lines or fewer, and is influenced by the works of John Ashbery and Emily Dickinson. The collection contains three main sections, titled *Petals for the Divide*, *Settled Beer Awaits Us*, and *Postscript: Lions*, which explore the possibility of the feminine as a redemptive force in society and nature.

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## 1. Petals for the Divide

element

at the dinner party I  
was the sparrow who called  
outside the window come forth  
beloved of sky and dirt briefly  
while the line blurred  
breathing blurs the line

all along the tree  
reaching forth with tree  
hands held element of sky  
as though the dancer  
were the same

and promising  
through its primeval glow  
star and horseshoe  
temple and temple spawn  
wonder and inevitable gaze  
while the squirrel

acorn love pats the earth  
redeem with your palmprints  
redeem from all the fibers  
we are sentient tendril stretched  
breathing

the beloved

with the flower  
she still searches  
casting out beauty  
for a handful of dirt  
kneading light starved tendrils  
where forbidden hands reach  
the book says we learn  
being from the trees  
she replies my beloved  
whispers his heartbeat  
like they do

when the firmament breaks  
with your sadness  
I'll be with you

when time breathes in element  
I'll be with you

when trees fail to reach you  
I'll be with you

awash in starlight higher  
than the dirt waiting for you  
breathing your ether always  
to the end of the age

different these sounds

to count the strands of time  
passing the tree scraped  
its prophecy rattling  
light soaked lilac awaits  
breathing cold ether she said  
my beloved dwells there  
shining warming my skin  
with science stained limbs  
she is the voice of one  
crying out in the garden  
make straight the element

lying back she inhales  
mystery shifting form  
breath was the medium  
liquid viscous clouds  
birds gaze down upon her  
hands move aside the grass  
stretching with each exhale  
wider than the sky  
closer than the dirt  
widening still

hope the dance

begin in this space  
hands persistent reaching  
all the flowers three steps  
who stretched return cast  
aside these vines

we were the beloved  
before symmetry bound  
those hollow call weeping  
squandered alone within  
glass indifferent

while the trees dynamic  
scrape their promise  
dirt spewed salvation  
from on high shall break  
always that line

crowding the glass  
for warmth sun stylus  
etch that element hope  
points outside fleeting  
the dance

breathing

they pulled apart the rain  
grasping each element  
sky rapt hands cold cracked I  
cried out from the parlor

only in the hardness  
should along pain as glass  
stings against the edges  
pressing this evenness

that love so lost where was  
time friend the need you held  
sparrow called once beloved  
then from the mist you say

everything starlight fades  
your consolation bleak  
too silence tight this shell  
within harsh the structure

still parlor dust books piled  
caked air for one moment  
wisp along sudden page  
divine exhale

days spent drifting

pieces by threes we scattered  
serene edges sorrow sharp  
always quiet snow she left  
trapped we glass submit weeping

cease ourselves among these lines  
standing where once was flying  
silence where before we sang  
what know sparrows of exile  
is their flight similitude

lost within cold scraping those  
ordered corridors we live  
abandoned bereft remain  
slightly breathing blur the glass  
slightly cast aside that line

writhing still to break this form  
take drink that stark element  
then in your isolation  
remember our spent birdflight

tourmaline

once I heard all the trees  
whisper starlight bleak repose  
katydid were you once this way  
pushing this symmetry forlorn

whisper starlight bleak repose  
tendrils tight moment I was there  
pushing this symmetry forlorn  
breath itself runs tourmaline

tendrils tight moment I was there  
squirrel rose and love abide  
breath itself runs tourmaline  
untie and break that knot

squirrel rose and love abide  
drifting and the sky my soul  
untie and break that knot  
grass promise sparrow song

drifting and the sky my soul  
once I heard element  
grass promise sparrow song  
katydid were you once this way

snow paths

imagine a line she  
whispers soft pine sketches  
gathering within winter  
while tightly snow

breathing against trees cross  
consecrate this element  
too stretching your fierce  
redemption

anticipate the wind when  
winter scarce tightens  
dreamily haze this line  
blessed inhale

new snow paths settling  
exhale through wistful  
paling crest the effort  
cast aside cast aside

constant she beams forth  
scars begotten where bounded  
grasp petals once reveal  
seeping presence

recollection

before I formed you  
wing soft breeze kneading  
ever dirt glorious I loved  
you stark standing inhale  
pulsing life starlight love you  
still among the roses

trust always the grass  
points inevitable such rain  
chart your element exhale  
tracing voice skyward woman  
what is that to you dancing  
the beloved birdflight  
garden freed

within your hands mercy  
breath dynamic whose trees  
receive your wing streams wistful  
moonlight seems

take me willow simple sent  
again fulfill this river briefly  
transforms quiet along acorns  
constant flower

mathematics

voice this presence  
dynamic every point  
spreading void singular  
the branch vertex pulsing  
multiply beyond old wine  
constant stirring potential  
within life

bridging the element  
I count atom lilac milk  
heavy truth trees whisper  
expectation the squirrel taps  
breathing in threes the rose  
my beloved pulled into being  
the real angles we pray  
taste and see

close always the edges  
sky soaked sparrow alight  
rejoice that prime radiant  
born apart rending passion  
numerous too quantify free  
morning embodied pounce  
to dance her new mercy  
exponential  
scalene

radiance

whispers always press the snow she  
line stark alone clarity stretch  
brambles scrape the element glass  
one was

apart from these thorns her beloved  
gone wind streams light sparrowsong  
perfect love casts out fear when love  
petals depart love bereft

promise breath blurs lines to the end  
that age ending past harsh sketches  
caught within her bold the line he  
wisps some other place

ascended still that line the glass  
redeem this time and blur redeem  
exhale anew through parlor drift  
these sparrows

she cries out am I words  
that I should live within this line  
while entry jagged gains the trees  
too spent to answer

ever blurring

your salvation streams forth  
children meadows playing full grass I  
squirrel patting rhythm earth dynamic  
know these lilacs

music she too dark window hears  
crystalline her ambivalence  
flakes petals chipped from sparrow calls  
this pathway lies dormant

trees always whispering alive  
pebble loosened by the wind along  
bird branches exhale through her hair  
seeds becoming stalks alight  
briefly through star fields the wings  
flower abundant tracing the sky  
element blurs those paths together  
snow breathing with the spider  
they all are

she barely listens sighing stark  
walls dust covered still the dance  
touches the everything softly beckons  
outside waiting

when we were that flower

past that line web was  
breath beckoning drift through hands  
we live these strings our heart  
coursing through the veins we are

slight music for an instant  
glides into everything trees  
I felt that gossamer pull  
and all along these wings this air

sky sand filament and branch  
becoming all the bee alight  
upon the flower we all were  
starlight still within whispered

release too close child beauty bound  
alive expand freely meadow breeze  
disperse beyond this skin element  
wholeness swirling mist your home

then silent grasping web bleak fear  
cricket chirp among blinding wind I am  
parlor dust this self alone I turned  
toward the shelter of the line

capillary

draw a line this self gently  
layers sand packed between trees  
more than veins divide  
I from sparrows dance alone  
creating the line we blur  
salvation fleeting those apart  
construct I grasp the mist praying  
freedom beyond the solid we  
twist among ourselves

he becomes we becomes these  
these becomes all breathing one  
element rhythm beating track  
deliver through these cells new life  
arise these bones and cast aside  
your singleness you so tired invent  
awaiting squirrel rose lilac river  
breeze within you live

redeem all this breath these hands  
earth connects we swirling starlight  
embraced within this mystery  
I dissolve

exponential

breathing pain music I drink  
cast and silken fronds your face  
caresses sun grateful leaf  
love and subtle stark the depths  
grass raise violet and turns  
your book living script they add  
who add trees and element  
fills with the dust this parlor

whirl along lines glass writes  
and your stone dashed sparrow  
whisper and redeem brilliant  
pulsing joy petals fleeting  
still dance garden tendrils home  
branch and pristine lilac drift  
these meadows reach and laughter  
children acorn life the paths

end and the dreams they point  
skyward beginning brambles  
twist and arise dirt austere  
heavy with your difference  
and the heartbeat ever all

slowly we turn

heartbeat singular pain these fires  
jewels scrape runes upon her beloved  
sky wing memories along grass  
secrets she reads the sparrows know

children play rushes with one sound  
this flower every bee its veins  
she waits with the lilacs exhale  
element for the song this balm

when she felt all the trees unite  
one tree voice birdflight carries forth  
and chant breaks through the spider web  
seeping still more these streams expand

flowing the meadows abundant  
too grab the hands their hunger turns  
her prayer petals they take and feed  
seized as though the gift were fleeting

forgive them slurping surfeit grasp bereft  
they know not beloved this fragile breath

reaching always through

slow hope grows garden gently the night  
element pristine snow she dances  
stretch bossa nova evanescent  
the trees reach forth leaves strings to touch her

night expands hands grasp the dance still dance  
remains abundant flows these sparrows  
flight through night soaked skies bright the rhythm  
she gave them salvation the roses

float soaring girl through star starved meadows  
lonely earth my arms alone know you  
shine warmly this winter indifferent

shuttered hands cast through the paths we are  
dreams stretching mists lilac sky serene  
children sing glistening starlight streams  
while whippoorwills call these woods beloved  
unclasp your petals wisps breeze release  
bellflower song

less than bees

this garden holds still our hope  
winter grey between harsh lines  
salvation takes element  
springs forth from the paths we laid

winter grey between harsh lines  
depart while the lilac sky  
springs forth from the paths we laid  
whisper anew sparrow flight

depart while the lilac sky  
you love crowns the trees you gave  
whisper anew sparrow flight  
bees spread forth their meadow song

you love crowns the trees you gave  
listen while their children play  
bees spread forth their meadow song  
alight petal gleams the air

listen while their children play  
this garden holds still our hope  
alight petal gleams the air  
salvation takes less than bees

element

because we forget the trees  
still whisper love reaching  
branches steady course veins  
release tendrils the dancer  
promises to return  
and returns

the sky shone these roses  
emeralds your flight tracing  
when glass scraped script divide  
breathing makes whole the petals  
one flower remains ever  
all rejoice

she stretches high stark vines  
garden mists reveal this shell  
tight skin element breaks  
slowly shifts the bird meadow  
beckons with grass music  
wing alight

all along the tree beloved  
leaf abundant the secret  
feathers touch acorn they are  
waiting moment call her  
paths divine

## 2. Settled Beer Awaits Us

weathered

crystalline the world knows  
steel breaks the tenement shaft  
chalk scrape these lines life scoffs  
trembling sweat the lawman

staggered straight tracks your blood  
mocks slight heroes their heads  
still girders these capillaries  
our disease all

samson moans my prayer  
soul streaked terminus let me  
shatter these walls the dust  
hollow pangs this strain tightens  
asphalt fleeting

your skull steeped eyes the hymn  
mutters all my brilliance  
these battlements creak rust borne  
sigh this indifference die with me

leather long the wear these chains  
stain your hallowed skin  
may yet live

once these fields

sun beats these blistered streets  
disease harsh steel we were  
the day ignores our names

counting survive the sand  
they are chisel strength beam  
wire rebar desire glass  
expand past girders grasp  
concrete mere reckoning  
stylus styled the noontime  
while these tendons tighten

structures stretch beyond light  
desolate ripening  
strain along alleyways  
trembling these our hope  
too stone stark roads forgive

fitfully dust caked walls  
reveal these tracts we feel  
always the desert fumes  
scraped sidewalk cast aside  
bituminous streams stain  
rubble bleak wisps fleeting  
forlorn we seek the paths

aquamarine

water was our vision I remember  
you were that sky and I whispered the rains  
revealed the pain thinking through this skin  
indifferent treetops lined wing tracks above us

the pond we loved striped along vertical blinds  
humming songs these vents as though carillon  
timpani electric crashes glass strewn yards  
living when I touch edges cast within time  
rocks alone mark paths between these lines  
breeze there was dancer sent from that garden  
I dreamt floating these waves she tendrils exhaled

aquamarine primeval through this gutter  
flows I imagine the streams capillary  
green these weeds crack as the prairie grass  
filigree golden the sun I can feel it  
past desert winds mists sparrows alight  
the children I hear call forth the heather  
say we could live among those meadows  
again that ribboning brilliance behold  
fading it brushes my outstretched fingers

iconoclast

every time you breathe the dragon  
wings stretch gossamer your inhale  
sweat simpers along tattooed skin

shocked whispers warm the air we hear  
cinnamon once made you wonder  
can we live reaching toward the trees  
mother painted your room lilac  
praying the stone gods might hold you  
still stream soaked fields beseeched you home  
your picnic remains uneaten

fight you always told me skyward  
the road will give you all you need  
chuckling we wander stars away  
while you make our stark arrangements  
be careful slight roses call you  
skillfully you wrestle those clouds  
we escape among the tundra

these galley winds rest wildly through me  
scarred arms point the direction you ran  
pitiful dogs drawn upon thunder  
scattered sings that stylus again  
too stung streaked fingers wring the mists  
your journey etched within these eyes

mistakes their sheen bright beyond us  
divination leads me ahead  
ever tracing wistful your smile

meanwhile the moon

what else could the girl have done back then  
floating on turgid ponds reflection thinks  
you sing straight while these store parking lots  
every puddle smiles she wonders and moon  
always quick to conversation that one  
grandfather said front porch chair creaking  
tonight remember the picnic when we played  
circumstance these wheels rusty trailer  
ever the highway waits for us be sure  
arms outstretched you call deadlocked  
her blank draperies

pulling alongside the tournament I  
sort the mail and drift slowly power tools  
cry out for this first solution every time  
too soon you return finely beams this church  
shucks corn as sacrament the birds prevail  
over lunch you tell me you always loved  
working late the office sounds of frogs  
and she lisps each raindrop during your call  
did you know then she would one day decide  
everything waking from that nap I shook  
greedily starlight reaches  
your eyes the mantra

if you skate that edge choose swiftly your friends  
letters restore the powerful their blossoms  
hitchhiking at sunrise we remember these  
throughout you remain hungry for croissants  
their melted butter ruined my report still  
I think of lilacs whenever the city  
your dreams stale crumbs under this table  
within tendons move empty beasts stripped bare  
heartbeat echoes all she ever told you  
breeze carries her scent mere wisps  
along these canyons

as though reconciled

slight springs these velvet paths                      time reckons the harsh waves  
rise beyond your tight skin    flight splintering always    we were  
icicle heady blue flows the sanskrit page wings your guide  
ever the wilderness                      evening freely breeze divide

1.

in a clearing                      age the dance rushes spring filament  
grass we played hayfields the mirth                      cardamom stretch reveal  
lowing if dreams were hush                      finely pine sentient beheld  
seeds we cast                      lay still eastward these hands                      petals you  
along meadows gather waits                      crystalline the exhale

2.

pierces the skies capillary                      close knowing your ocean trace  
sextants squint alone these ropes                      passive the horizon sighs  
what were land your blessing                      we simply    guess hay moon home  
eyes divine these waves we orbit wistful passing tarantella star spun girl  
thoughts blink aside the spray                      wheel grips the hands still hands  
drift the hours                      granules memory grit                      as though sketch aloud  
rudder only creak our wings slowly                      slight cedar air  
suez the clouds whisper                      these crinoline sails

3.

heartbeat you ever streams I wonder                      did you hear the same bells  
the same strings aloft flutter                      raise indifferent winds                      I taste it  
violet these years cast within timpani                      canvas alone my wounds mark the time  
thunder as counting dreams my arms the dance your mists beloved  
promise still this comfort                      always wings pristine warmth abide  
mercy gilds these hallowed paths                      grass sighs your lullaby tender  
petals fleeting grasp evade                      dance this nightfall we remember

sidewalks too shatter

riding from the market I hear wings  
caution lights strain these streets dynamic  
the drivers release their feral moans  
three times these chain links a symphony

hedgerows mutter her name still the spring  
ignites torches once bright boulevards  
pedals spiral air pieces divine  
her possibilities carillon

meanwhile bees disturb sunlight my hope  
stark black boots their sleet hands I feel it  
heavy the curtains drawn among us  
those moon soaked rafters await her song

we count the lines between my colors  
skies timpani when devotion fails  
divide all our simple streams again  
then tell the trees to stop their chanting

that old straw soul too strong the mantra  
only knowing one way I hold her  
laurel beautiful enough for here  
their branches while we breathe it quiet

watch as it drifts away

paint the dream while yet      these spindly arches      cold kisses the crest  
hands make the space I am      always pressing against beauty your beams  
when did this exist      cure this sweet disease these regiment starlight  
quick raise scrape the pain along grasp

minuet  
bleak strain streams  
rains      straight  
grass we felt  
speckled cows  
low sharp leaves  
beckon green  
    shadows  
meadow grace  
stretch lean sky  
sparrow paths  
dewdrops paths  
reaching they  
reaching they  
past these mists

the clouds gauze was      particles infirmity bright      still calling breeze  
release time the pattern among empty shelves      bellows these arms bear the scars  
memory strings beyond these walls      would you sing that lullaby      distant the  
chimes  
breathe brisk fog heavy this whisper seems      sketches child remember  
if the air fading transparent colors ever

a parable for midday

what would you change my love she said trees  
peering through vertical blinds thick the sound  
wine ringing into her glass perhaps  
coat checkers await some forbidden fall  
antelopes chomp reeds we will never know

when I refrained from counting those lawns  
starlight cleared away the emperor's lunch  
apart from that we saw slight wilderness  
generally tea leaves interfere  
the preferred nature trails evanescent

come noontime children crawled into her lap  
looking up from caesar salad divine  
circumstances drove her mother to song  
this amused her friends believing it proves  
pantheons call their chanting distraction

still the garden breeze crisp on her skin  
delight alone remains of those bleak fields  
indigenous saints beckoned metallic  
always regard bursts forth from their harvest  
gears grind away all virtuous remnants

after dessert I followed her outside  
her melody sleek as though meadowlarks  
whisper was the moment I first knew her  
undisguised she shone past those violet clouds  
her hush surrounding me with petals

one more prodigal

it was raining when we last spoke  
I strummed string tapestries and you  
awash in coffee spattered songs  
while the front porch steps need painting  
your sister closed her eyes and dreamt  
someday despite this filament  
we will breathe hay air together

the thought seems so fragile and still  
helping the children get ready  
I notice meadows believing  
the breeze whispers it possible  
bristled paths back may yet know you

do you sense this ripening fall  
within the sparrow flight you are  
listening these footsteps mere raindrops  
you unlike that once tattered boy  
these marshes that now bear your name

lost within dreams again these pines  
reach forth their branched arms as though yours  
your leaves greet me along this road  
running your winged chants cover me  
with weary hands I hum them home

afterward

while sparrows  
grass we were  
brightly the air  
wine perfumes  
seeping thunder  
she says still  
we can go back  
too late fields  
whisper her eyes

each drop sky  
feeling the leaves  
her lilies she  
considers yet  
love why these  
hallowed oaks  
prevail she asks  
my hands mists  
cast aside

overlooking  
harsh sediment  
the trees scoff  
embarrassed she  
stands ahead clouds  
once firmament  
fading her grasp  
dust breezes  
briefly past us

filament

hay moon  
oaks sigh  
brown  
own story  
their limbs

linger stark  
the trees I  
suspend  
as their eyes  
long with  
recollection

aware sky  
this promise  
stretching  
birds all

windchimes

despite leaves turning toward her silently  
mouthing words to string quartets she sighs  
gardenias fill the air with attention  
their aroma seeps widely the office  
calls unaware our conversation shifts  
necessities prevail over coffee

apart from the filament connecting  
two hands along gravel studded lamplight  
only her eyes finely hint these railways  
speak multitudes past breezy boulevards  
eventually maps reach their limits  
rumor has it her friends plot the journey

rivers away the department debates  
whether she should have written that letter  
delightful strands perhaps the rope bridge holds  
the climber pulls her aside to inquire  
while gliding through stark cornfields we notice  
reflection heavy upon our shoulders

desk drawers alight with anticipation  
supervisors discuss their agendas  
love beyond burdened glass the cubicle  
too fierce to touch watching from the break room  
cellos their last streams warble around us  
she follows the tune as it wanders past

the good thing about the cold

three file folders and paper clips later  
she asks me whether we will ever know  
what causes the roads streaking violet  
is it that faint timpani I wonder

meanwhile waiting for sun tea annoys her  
fingers patter across the barroom gate  
gathering mists with the scent of her hair  
roses indignant peer through scattered dust

if I dance alongside these trumpets still  
love multiplies sparrows across the skies  
grandfather says he would pay good money  
parades were so extravagant those days

the main route fills me with rain anymore  
one bleak triangle tinkling the breeze  
beyond likely plants stretch past banquet walls  
we settle our bets and work alongside

the roads know their own

across the table she asked me  
brightly chimes your corn god these days  
refusing to raze these fields I  
admire while the flat train traces  
possible cats carving starlight  
amazed I catch her feather falls  
all along the shadow these eyes

she always cries out when the waves  
loud against screen doors her temper  
straight strains beyond the firmament  
I remember when she first loved  
we traveled starkly in those days  
for warmth she streamed bare wheels jetside  
these streets her heartbeat she left me

hummed with her motorized buzz we  
once riding my friends still delight  
what else could they have done she said  
gravity rarely touched her lips  
I wrote about such joys back then  
ever before we stretched harsh limbs  
gingerly whispers the pavement

alone my prayer these file folders  
catalog gods indifferent  
she reads through them almost sighing  
once after lunch I follow her  
trees reach her wings lightly she smiles  
eager skies the moon protects her  
beaming while roads breathe her away

whenever I see my breath

delighted I prayed the port into being  
you stayed until the mists covered your hands  
always I think about that day shivering  
here in the parlor drinking hot chocolate  
my mother used to tell me son those eyes  
were never born of woman yet now I  
cup in hand believe she must be right

your call wrings me from my reverie  
chasing you may take all this paperwork  
still they never would approve my transfer  
afterward we discussed slipping fingers  
bridges bare against some streaked countryside  
infinite the roses you could go there  
these simple gutters might scarcely miss you

when we are older we may look back  
at those days that you have already passed  
laughing I gasp this thought leaves me listless  
my thumbs tremble at the chance to hold you  
the apartment door flings open among dust  
echoes alone await my expedition  
snow embarrassed that I would so linger

taken with slight scenery

besides the dogs that gather beyond these gates  
who else did she tell I wonder our friends  
coffee always sends them running splendidly

incumbent in the finest holiday lace  
and you should have seen the ballerina  
hold court beneath fluttering skies  
moon was the last time we wandered among them  
circuits buzz alive as these words our roses

remind me why we ever left this flat tire  
heavy with mercy were the priests those days  
cardamom their liturgy while sunrise  
feasts upon tattered tablecloths her hope

she blames me for the changing waves I know  
all these borrowed trade winds make her love you  
hedgerows crying from her song strung potential  
cast lots overflowing dotted mailboxes  
they breathe while she brings their patterns enough

you leave the reckoning past feathered creeks  
dynamic were their flights ever behind you  
at eleven she calls me from the game

fleeting this springtime

I would have been those birds she says  
exhaling the willow leaves stretch  
around her wistful symphony

she wanders still paths to love you  
touch alone her guide bleak through fields  
children point upward the treetops  
sketch sky patterns lighting her way

who could tell you floating girl  
you say blessed moon you call her  
careful whisper the doves those eyes

she would answer were the roses  
words her marks upon your parched skin  
clarion mists stream staccato

times she turns you left wondering  
can we live within the pieces

slight seeps between that opening  
you along these shore struck grasses  
running to reach the song blooms wide  
her petals disperse in the breeze

brook once was moonrise

gears trip the slightest shine fans say  
chopping this air bold with difference  
when will too strained colors prevail  
sleet spreads its tattered sheen around you

chipping visions from my windshield  
reminds me you played when these last stars  
sang through the masses relevant hymns  
and the firmament whispered your eyes  
ever love this rain streaked monument

piles of aluminum cans reveal  
capillaries bright with polishing  
the office staff busily tells them  
management may never know my plans  
fields white with care beckon just beyond

overtime leaves me thirsty with schemes  
seeing your kitchen light thrills me  
you bring me outside the water you know  
excitedly we chase sky petals

afterward settled beer awaits us  
together we could scale these girders  
as though whirlwinds were not our home

chasing lilacs the breeze

whisper your devotional boulevards  
then the convoy will carry you home  
strangely that hymn penetrates my mind  
whenever they sidestep our appointment  
divided these streams call you mother

ready with our travel bags we scatter  
farther than those racetracks will allow  
three sleek raindrops trace through distant wings  
advice you always see fit to give  
thin among my fog heavy demands

if we could breathe within those fields again  
you would still leave me the secretaries  
laughter harsh seeds along these sodden paths  
call even when you arrive there safely  
my direct line crackles with the thought

hold me once more mists chant around you  
revelation your strength as spattered days  
spiral our blank clockworks into being  
over my coffee break we examine  
whether highways dynamic the lilacs

arriving your priority springtime  
breeze yet our life alone these petals  
sketch gently their sky patterns elusive  
symphonies swell just beyond those branches  
from the bleachers we can almost touch them

apart from sky castles

crowds worship that straw god  
the priest told us then the sunset  
my pencils cast these shadows  
whenever you draw prim lines  
over wine I thought I loved you  
this river runs blindly at night  
you tell your friend still the stones  
mutter their disapproval

pushing this wagon uphill  
each weekday you sail straight lanes  
while I count these capillaries  
your mother packed two raincoats  
as though we travel together  
worrying makes things different  
so we were wrong once you whisper  
I trim hedgerows in silence

sunlight always hides the best paths  
you touched me through long grass again  
later we rode slim to the wind  
when you floated beyond my reach  
crying I remember you said  
if we were not empty my love  
there I would build our castle  
two skies could never hold it

### 3. Postscript: Lions

anger slowly she moves

moans obscure these roots as before  
and seedpods whirl their approval  
bitter this wilderness crumbles  
I see through rising mercury

his impatience dissolved wheat fields  
scarlet was morning when he left  
while smacking her gums keeps the time  
she seeks him across spiteful dirt

the dingoes carry meat twos and threes  
dust scattered as though seasoning  
carefully they avoid the breeze  
aware of her passing shadow

mother would oftentimes tell me  
before the mountains called her home  
skyward was the only refuge  
when fury took shape as woman

tiny birds chirp warnings alight  
she barely hears them through the haze  
foreboding her rattled exhale  
they heed the sound and clear her path

tepid grace

that evening the bonfires lost their resolve  
while sleet exotic as the scars across her back  
sketched runes in the fish market window

cafes dark with the scrapes of past mumbling  
remind her why she left despite whispers  
that she alone deciphered

automotive the sound of her rosary  
thrashing guttural against vacant skies  
redeemers too listless for wine

after the overture bleak seas unfurled  
detritus adrift with the penitent  
branches hallowed those streets beyond

her heartbeat loud with the blood call of martyrs  
abandoned among citadels their chorus  
ever shifting the streams call her puma

seeping lamplight breathes sheen along her footfalls  
keys jangle their indifference around her  
morning brings only the sparrows

spatters of kindling

I called her on the way to work she said weeds  
seep the delight from arborvitae  
as though pointing upward they fail her

strange as light always seemed her lover  
and clouds reached forth their swollen arms  
lingering mist her scent when she drifted past  
horses traced her pattern along creek paths  
while bees strummed petals in store parking lots

apart from them scaffolding sighed  
with the weight of those simpering gargoyles  
the dirt miles away conspired I heard it  
we barely noticed the thin grass  
when she exhaled across the vineyards

these are the packs they carried  
these are the smoldering drifts they live

these are merely atoms among hedgerows  
bleak their glimmering eyes in the warm sand

rapt and throbbing

the heat from the whites of her eyes  
could burn waves through the crisp savanna  
grandfather said were these fields quiet  
from the drumbeat of seedpods and blood

direction gives slight comfort these mountains  
shattered strings divine what grows in sand  
trickling against the grit of perseverance  
hardened bone shards muffle her whisper yes

past lit match the last words those grasses sigh  
around you fingers of tendrils scrape the dirt  
while ragged gods beguiled by the bleating scent  
bright these glistening husks with your exhale

this sacrifice anodyne for her hunger  
embrace it as though precious bread and wine  
seep from the edge of her lips to the greedy earth

rain alone dissolves regret while mercy  
wizened as the crow hands that release you  
and impalas seethe with the force of smoke

departure

time dispels myth through ridges of bubbled paint  
mechanical trees blare as though hummingbirds  
sing uttering more beautiful names than these

while goats gather for the committee meeting  
remembrance teases through the corner office  
dogs in charge of us all force their agendas

forgettable seeds roving gently the breeze  
caked hands scraped with age distract smiling lions  
all along the main switchboard they hum unaware

file folders skin heavy with their acrid scent  
match thick sulfur mingled with the sighs of blood  
experience shows their rosaries float past

solemnly bide the blind assistants these skies  
elevators crammed with sleek fawns light their way  
arid the fleet exhalations alongside

rocks trees birds thrive beyond this bleak scaffolding  
predators slink through the negotiations  
when fluorescence betrays these prey their footfalls

still though we move

your love too strong whispers those fields she knows  
reaping these very blades the girl so young  
clean slices glisten fast against slight hay

lame engines bellow forth their liturgy  
she laughs when she remembers the blank words  
while she traces star petals with her fingers

tease apart patterns of shifting tendrils  
grandmother told her still she scans dark skies  
waiting for some break in the firmament

cautiously the lace border around us  
sends shadows through distant dividing walls  
timid as freedom we seek these gardens

electric she sighs paths into being  
creation was once that easy the sands  
call her while the meadows breathe their firm hush

alone she scales the breeze for our own sake  
her cubs though we much older than these hills  
delight in the pitted youth of her hands

salvation patters rain toward the window  
awash within the dunes she made herself  
we wait sniffing the air for coming storms

sparks may yet occur

beside lint thick candy grandmother  
stores purse size secrets while forgetting  
paper engulfs flesh as tinder for lions

she cries when torrents of passing time  
move further touching houseplants for warmth  
love fails while love once throbbing with smoke  
sings pathetic the dirge along pitted dirt

rain leaves small circle marks within charred brush  
her sick breath cloying arches through mind corners  
handily covered such deafening teal ringed sounds  
while beauty as powdered sugar streaks the breeze

opening the package called old lady she smiles  
cantaloupe grey her whispers slim through pale air  
hands scale the lines scenery scratched upon her  
and sweat unforgiving blurs her dust caked eyes

always chagrined when reducing robins to words  
she wields her pot lid against waves of complaints  
wary that unsuspecting skies might behold  
known and yet knowing fully the mirror blinks

pulling her loose skin gives meaning as roses  
ripe with the day she first felt that bleak embrace  
gears grinding heavy with dull reminiscence  
fade away for the moment while she drifts past

only the oak trees call forth women from mists  
tales past these settled tomes writers beguile her  
when starstreams cast to the sand tremble home

silt soft as dancing yields to her touch while lace  
graces the table that lately held their plans  
she lights one sap stained letter then another

beyond evening prayer

love bitter as wine outlives these oaks  
quiet long after scraping branches  
only those slight maidens remember  
rumors of water thin while slim sands  
divide the remaining light among  
prickly pears their primitive needles  
warm with slick lifeblood beat alongside

communion mechanical the gears  
ground to powder her devotional  
sighs while lightly growl lions beyond  
breeze blows apart their sanctuaries  
whisper immediate despite them  
stripped and the altar blares forth brilliance  
louder than blank symphonies those eyes

constant hunger pulling her forward  
mouthing indifferent prayers as though rain  
breathed its last before she left the room  
for her sake mountains infuse stark skies  
mythological their pronouncements  
with etchings distinct against the clouds  
she barely hears above those sparrows

all along love streams over sand dunes  
thick from the promises she exhaled  
at the shore mercy still awaits her  
running those paths she almost feels it  
paw prints heavy through forgiving grass  
gods finally rouse with the sweet smoke  
they turn their heads as she floats past them

blank revelry

new cars clog the turnpike  
every day while I drive to work

exhaust the filament sheen  
dazzling against sullen skies

wreckage those promises  
still traffic teases these wings

and rain tastes of acrid pines  
far from the sands that borne us

love so tight this bleak stain  
stripped dignity the burden

lions sit thick as though gods  
wine stained breaths slim redemption

sighs stronger than gridlock  
break metallic walls this flame

ours are the moans within time  
while needed things expand

fury brightly we fly  
strings beyond impotent smoke

marks streak these sounds our passage  
gently ash falls with petals

while the sun roamed elsewhere

rapture meant something once grandmother said  
painting swirls onto concrete walls

judgment so bright would sear Gethsemane  
if lions still paced the savanna

instead gods surfeit themselves on our prayers  
as though muddled groans quench their thirst

redemption burnt out long before bleak sleet  
fingers streak through the wilderness

while forgiveness sits heavy in the gut  
tracing these furrowed lines of woman

through the thicket of capillaries those scars  
sigh desperate sparks into being

aftermath

breath provides slight warmth within these rushes  
while natural fields shrink with snowfall  
chains jangle the only hymns we hear

we could have flown those blank stars forever  
if hedgerows pointed the journey home  
instead we wander through slim pawprints

where is that sleek solemn girl I once knew  
floating back when desert dreams revealed  
music along blank industrial streets

last I saw her maelstroms streamed electric  
as though anger could erase fetid wrongs  
and disease lay weak with her pirouette

since buildings block light from capillaries  
measure the years in dust lines through lace  
almost too late for reckoning

locomotives growl vigils with lions  
the firmament tired of listening  
sighs with ruminations we barely feel

redemption more filling than wine  
rumbles across some horizon  
we can taste its smoke on the breeze

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