

Drying Out

Above me, the tall sky stretched in an uninterrupted sheet of dingy blue, cupping skyscrapers and slashing through clouds like the patchy belly of the Great Beast of the human race and underneath goes the *thrum-thrum* of the subway lines rushing past, going, going faster and faster. I could hear all the people sitting in neat rows underground, hurtling to *God knows where* until somehow Ithaca calls their name back home or somewhere else, dreaming chewing crying stomping and drying out all at once, a vast clothesline strung out in the *thrum-thrum* of the endless underbelly of the world. The road was a dusty gravelly coated mess, the kind of gravel that gets in your shoes because with every step you kick up the dust with your heel. No turning back, I thought, and as I thought this I heard and without turning could see in my mind's eye the asphalt splintering away behind me as if it had never been there at all. And now I knew there truly never had been a sidewalk, just the bluish walking on an endless pavement into a dusk that smelled like a broken promise. I cracked my knuckles, popping each finger out of its socket for half a second. In this moment, I am reminded of the fleshiness of life, the meat on my body -- soft flesh unconnected to any organs or bones, simply occupying space, shoving aside the void. For all the clocks and flushing toilets and brushed-steel electric retinas, we are still meat and arteries speeding onwards thoroughfares, colliding, spitting, swallowing hot soup. I look down at my hands and am surprised to find stubby fingers instead of perfect clockwork appendages.

In these moments, how can I not be overcome by wonder? That I am flesh and bone, hoping for nothing, between the below and the above.