

Sliding Scale

Celina Su

All those faucet-masked yesteryears in exchange for this distancing.
A decade and a half of dots and debts in one lightning swoosh.

What to do on rainy days?
 Besides move sluggishly towards May, bathe in
 A purgatory of the banal, haunting comfort of erstwhile ennui
 Threaded with... what? To articulate the missing without the conspicuous absence of, search for—

Section 8 vouchers, pink and blue forms,
Farmer's markets in lieu of glowing AFDC cheese, dreamy flashback sequences of yellow #6.
A take-out pizza every fourth Friday, *vitaminas* of rotting cantaloupe and banana,
Mmmm.... Tastes like, tastes like. Our very own anti-*saudade*.
Praising the blank stigmata of food stamps, shock and awe at *this far*.
Translating the home health aides, the chicken farm, the whiplash of neon mobility.

These dissolved madeleines, a debt of what belonging.
 Going “home” to—

Their simultaneous discourse of

Her world shrinking with each prophylactic pill,
Her very own erasure of outsourced swallowing.
I deconstructed her with words, threw them into her shell of a car.
As is this wont, to disregard with a high-minded mask,
Heteroskedasticity a euphemistic retort for my bearded, eight-directional anticipation—

This burnished identity a tawdry clubbing mechanism,
Planned obsolescence of this immigrant terrain, blockbuster cul-de-sac,
Godot my homeless neighbor.