every time they ask if we’ll rebuild

humans are not obedient, like animals, to the seasons, but seasons we can circumvent, touch tenderly with a ten foot stick of satisfaction, simultaneously of and above but

the muck bodied memory of a meteorologist, briny with lips of catastrophe, generates the shock of lost cattails. whole and gritty, repression, protrusion. at an uncontrolled muddy compasse of oh, bizarre swirling. oh, controlled smell. oh, hips, sand, category of encompassing taste: the whir-grit-sea the dirty-salty of cataclysmic tame

as humans, oh: destruction’s sinuous crumbling of oh, fishy oh, whirl. this fearful battering troposphere

a hurricane watch has been issued for your area:

house on the ground and sea in the sky there’s a uh um my mother’s picture ahh there’s a um rusted out truck it’s over and it’s outside in the finally rain um an iron on the sand and family in a tent ugh trailer trailer trailer trailer wailing in the hurt-shine

house? I uh here’s a picture um do you want this? um do you want this? uh should we keep it? hush that baby hush it go go inside? there’s ugh moss in my hair ugh muddy in my mouth uh tetanus shot tetanus shot tetanus um here uh sit drink breath shovel shovel shovel shovel it uh out through the uh kitchen door that’s uh across the um street now with all of our um childhood heights maked now um illegible under um mold under mold. walk soothe there’s a man lost um a woman sweeps her slab the baby asks why the baby asks why, “why the house fall down? why the house fall down? why she sweepin the ground? why she sweepin the ground?” baby answers, “no house no house house there,” and points to the Gulf. there is a bench our grandpere made with mold mold mold on everything death growing over the ugh objects of your life in the middle of i’m sorry here’s a can of soup i’m sorry here’s a bundle of tupperware i’m sorry

where’s the uh

what about the uh the thibodeauxs the uh the bagleys the uh the beringers the neighbors the uh their daughter and the waterline the waterline the kids survived i can’t i’ve never i don’t know where the money the cats survived they found him in his truck not a moment too soon i don’t know where ugh should i wait it’s ugh i should could i um how to ugh ugh ugh the roof upside down the house flat gone a shoe waves in the sea a front door in a tree a shrimping boat above pines like it was meant to be there

a hurricane warning has been issued for your area:

miss bourgeois weeding her muck garden with a sailboat dangling over her head, the shreds of its sails like leaves in a warped salt-choked oak

ramond robicheaux kneeling in pascagoula beach, “she was such a strong swimmer, she’ll give her back, she’ll give her back, give her back,” but there is nothing for a voice to echo off of when facing the Gulf

a recommended evacuation order has been issued for your area. contraflow evacuation routes have opened in your state:

before she comes to visit, we board our windows. we shop like starved beasts, and hoarding gallons of water, loaves of bread, we boil all the shrimp, barbecue all the meat, stuff the babies with milk, and roll the cheese into logs peppered with crushed pecans. all the family, all the neighbors, all the town meanders at a notch above normal. we laugh nervously. the old ladies finger rosaries made from rose petals, roses that grew in a garden where mary herself appeared to small french children, our ancestors, those petals picked and rolled and boiled by the delicate needle fingers of the dominican nuns who traveled great lengths to have them blessed by the pope himself. if they were wealthy enough, the women got these rosaries from italy themselves, more often than not, they bought them at the visitation monastery on spring hill avenue. there, they pray the hurricanes wouldn’t get us

fathers with huge bellies gulp beer until they slosh it on the ground or someone’s kid steals a sip. a mother or two dabbs embarrassed tears as she recalls last time last time last time last time when her husband her brother her grandbaby her daughter her friend her mother father aunt uncle cousin or dear elderly neighbor (we didn’t know she didn't have anyone) stayed too late, or couldn’t climb the stairs, or got caught in the attic screaming for jesus to please come please save her you savior as her kissing lips press the top of an attic roof her father or grandfather or his father before him sanded and painted and nailed with his own hands, she presses her kissing lips there as the water covers her face and as the rouge tide takes her as the wood is too thick the ax too heavy her arms too feeble she holds her rose rosary saying hail mary full of grace hail mary full of grace hail mary full of grace hail mary full of grace take me take me don’t let me know this end

a mandatory evacuation order has been issued for your area. a curfew will be implemented:

wear your most starched shirt wear your most starched shirt wear your most starched shirt we are going to a funeral two funerals several funerals we’d go to the movies but there are no movies our grandmere told us at the same time she told us about her friend, the nun, who stayed up all night with our grandmere on bourbon street until the sun rose over the mississippi river where they ate beignets so cliche to celebrate her last night of freedom before she selected seclusion at the visitation monastery on spring hill ave where they pray that hurricanes won't get us here. grandmere’s friend the nun prays that hurricanes won't us here and one has yet to, directly, at least since camille when almost every tree on spring hill avenue threw its spanish moss into the street. grieving, naked, and exposed, they suffer the indignity of their blown back branches, limbs stretched to breaking, languishing, and held only by the memory of their shade in the easter parade. we pick up their babies and grandbabies from the avenue, bath them in bay water by the buckets, a baptism a birthing, and gather those babies in plastic bags, bring them to the center of town to the cathedral of the immaculate conception to burn them in homage in sacrifice crying not again not again not again, but

a forced evacuation order has been issued for your area. evacuation routes will be closed:

everyone knows it’s not the eye to be scared of. on every porch in town the roof is painted blue for fashion or insects now it’s brown and green and stinks with rotting bodies and lays in the neighbor’s garden littered with children’s play things, fine china, muck

if you refuse to leave, you will not have cause of action for death, damages, or injuries against the state, any political subdivision, or agency. you will not be rescued. you will not be provided with lifesaving assistance:

everyday for weeks no power every day for weeks no school every day for weeks no work every day for weeks we drive to the dying house hold our breath try not to vomit here’s a shovel, here’s a mask, did you get your tetanus shot yet? are you sure, don’t touch that with your skin it’ll kill you and get those babies out of here don’t let it touch their little eyes too much too much too much too soon it’ll grow in there in their brains and they’ll remember the sight, but we can’t keep them from the smell- we’ll always remember the smell

\*statistically, the longer a resident lives on the Gulf Coast the less likely they are to evacuate for a hurricane