

SHAPES
LEFT
BEHIND

WWMAIRS

CONTENTS

A LAST SPRING.....	1
THE SWITCH.....	2
SOMEWHERE ELSE	3
ANOTHER WAVE	4
STREET BERRIES	5
THE LOCUST LEAF.....	6
“WELL?”	7
MELON DAYS	8
SUNFLOWERS	9
BY THE LILAC.....	10
MY YOUS	11
ANOTHER BLOOD SUN.....	12
ON MEETING	13
DESPITE MYSELF	14

A last spring

I wish you'd let the flowers bloom
before you named a thing unspoken.

And I won't blame your time alone
but I'll cry we missed another spring.

The switch

Today someone walking past me:
“Cheer up.”

(I must have had lots on my face)

which made me laugh
‘cause, like,

yeah,

show me the switch.

Somewhere else

you're answering different questions
but I'm still here
growing out hair
in a half-empty room,
feeling tragic.

I want new sweatpants
which is a silly thing to
stake happiness to, maybe
no sillier than an Other.

But I'm still sad
I can't ask you:
green or yellow?

Another wave

Another time of death;
they come in waves,
yellowed foam against
the sands, salt jellyfish
abandoned by the gulls.

I know the shape of
hollowed loss
but this one goes unshared.

Hand clamped to mouth
this one's the unburied
housecat:
blood and gravel,
a requiem of ants in the shoulder.

Street berries

Somhow dumb
I yearn for the tragic,

the fallen berry
on the sidewalk

a little
spot of spoilt jam.

The locust leaf

Maybe I could be
the locust leaf,
yellow in July,
riding still on
the glassy creek,
washing
forever out to sea.

I'll see mountains to New Orleans
then go under
in the gulf.

Churned up waters,
holy shrimp,
split-lip blood,
we'll sing the branded night to rest.

“Well?”

you say.
You! another you,
“well so what
is it for?”

Practice, then?
It must be.

Practice as
the shadows settle purple
into passing mist.

The storm we feared
burst;
not a drop but
purple and green.

Wild flower bloom
for practice.

Melon days

Today
the creek smells
like watermelons smell,
all mellow sweet
and cracked against
a forest floor,
sweet still then and clean.

Dusted flesh,
the dirt and seeds,
who cares if
juice drips down our chins,
sticky-faced, awake at night.

And today, yes,
melon days,
I show the shimmered
creek my knees
and even bumped —
they're smoother now —
I feel more me,
how funny
small things mean so much
though bodies never
ours for keeps,
who cares if
juice drips down our chins?

Sunflowers

This my nothing moreness of
a morning Thursday's
shifting light catching
lines against the curtains:
maybe it'll be here longer.

And the alley side sunflowers,
taller than the corn,
maybe they'll burst twice too.

By the lilac

Bury me by the lilac
like the cat the summer she died,
patches from fur-shaved
she had an inhaler and
I only laughed once
pressing it to her face,
lengths for love, I guess.

Bury me by the lilac
where the apples fell
in sweet July,
sick with sun and bird-bitten,
back when death stalked
only leafless,
grown arms could pull me
from the grass.

Bury me by the lilac
at fourteen
when sweat was sweet and sleep enough,
sorrow bound to butterfly
and I could still outrun myself.

My yous

How funny how
I swing from yous,
as if as if
and maybe nothing's really changed,
since I've loved you from
when I loved you
'til now. And

when you rise in me
all dreamlike, doing nothing,
I'm on fire,
drawing shadows, moth-balled
mumbled touchlessness,
hoping against myself
that I could love you still.

Another blood sun

through my ingrown hair summer,
the smoke is settling in,
filling the creases between the mountains
and our own edges unsmoothed.

Breathless to the lake's edge,
sure, we run across the mossy stones,
slipping beneath
and my chest pulls in
while we tread half drunk,
bobbing dumb in orange hues,
the false misted mountains;

at least I'll call it
beautiful.

On Meeting

It is not the dust of the road,
dried and washed and dried daily,
turned up like the leaves of some fall
brushed by shifted light.

It is not the asphalt-blackened
ashening of sneakers,
swapping slowly grit for mulch,
treads worn in patterns untouched here.

It is the smell of the pine sap
thick with time, persistent and unfixed,
indifferent to bark-scraped noses
accidental to its work.

It is not the the shape of their memory
but the stars alone,
the pinpricking animal
and a blinking off that we could live
distinct from space between the light.

It is not these things
that are beautiful anyhow,
that are found, soft, if you look,
and whose meaning is only despite us,
but the shapeless spaces left in looking.

Despite myself

I am torn again
from wanting you, even
knowing what I know

and your silence,
your doing nothing for
my wanting,

your eyes bright and
smile unbound in a photo on my phone
when I need to almost need you,

your looking away.

And your silence,
your doing nothing for
my tears

but being you
but having been
who you were,

your being,
and I am still —

It is enough
for my sighs, for
my breathless sobs
doubled against the counter
washing the single dish,
dirty water on my face.

Unkind, it is enough for
the losing to distraction
and the bile,
so much bile,
of a useless beating broken
that cannot look at
my own bruises.

It is enough, maybe,
for my sleep,
like some seed lost in the wind
hoping not for water,
but to be eaten.

To be eaten, yes, and
not hoping to be warmed
in passing,
not hoping to be held
in heart,
hoping wild to be shat from you,
to fall to earth
and in the dirt
reclaim the sun.

WWMAIRS © 2020
PRINTED IN DENVER