

Eden

I need an answer. There are no answers.
Nurses on the nightshift- angels looking for wings,
Christ's night brides wandering the ward;
doctors-unbirthed miracles imbued with ambient light.
We were told to fear the monster
knitting fingers under the bed.
We didn't know it could be beautiful if you made it like fire.

I want to recall every detail:
how they turned your body the color of fall,
rotated sheets on your bed, unrolled them over your chest,
a bed of white roses in a half-moon glow,
a benediction of snow, machines flickering blue-red-blue-red,
wheezing like those floats we laughed at every 4th of July
standing on the corner with our shirts off,
radiant in the hot summer sun.

I want to remember how they wheeled you off to radiology
rounding the corners of the hallways,
the way I remember growing up popping wheelies
with grocery carts, wobbling alongside aisles of soup cans, potato chips
spilling from our mouths onto the bleached linoleum,
men in coats as white as Mother's oleander,
scuffling their paper shoes
like kites scaling windless summer air.

How they unfolded your body like a love letter,
emptied containers of needles,
beaks of syringes, pulled their fingers deep
into the glove's sunny sheen, humming show tunes,
adjusting shunts as though they were adjusting your tie,
bruises strung like violets up the light blue thread of your arms.

I want to remember the yank of the curtains—
the halo of light surrounding your bed,
the smell of urine and Pine-sol, the temporary misshapen fragrance
of air, dispensers of evergreen, the shape, the size, the jello's luminous glow,
rooms with windows you could look out of with only the lens of an eye,

everything upside down, carnivalized, the night in a dark blue suit,
pinstriped, sporting a crystal corsage, hooks on the shower curtain
skirting the metal rod, water that slid over your shoulders,
down the ravine of your back, water over a fall,
a rosary, the beaded bones, shadows passing under the door,

schools of fish, their silver-tipped tails glistening.

That the days sitting by your bed were the otherworldly sea fogged in,
the whispers—breaths of birds, the flowers, the petals, our hands
inside the womb of our mother, lucent stems - fingers still touching.
I didn't know it could be so beautiful- the swelling of flowers,
the bright metal walls of a crib, the bluish tint of the television,
a blessing, the dazzling scalpel.

I didn't understand the suddenness of what was happening:
lesions of rose, of periwinkle, clinging like vines to your face,
pulling like a weed at the thick red root of your heart,
dividing your organs cell by cell,
liver, kidney, how God could create heaven and earth,
the Garden flush with the brilliance of every living thing,
your body a perfect world for a perfect virus to live in.