

**worn within belief**

daily practice

molly says  
she watches  
her tree's  
shadow for  
three hours  
every morning

thanatosis

is your mother in a worn and beaten dress? at rest  
in and amongst the circumstances  
at rest, when can i hug you, grasp your shoulderblades  
your breast ribs at rest

let your second person be a dream of some determined hand in hand

for once, thanatosis is the most apparent  
In death, indefence,  
In paralysis, in black and blue hope for the new age to be better than today,  
you,

## haibun bar review

*sophies'*

I am unreverable, I am desolate. I am no place of honor. The saints reached out, and they said that I had become unrecognizable, that it might be better if I were to fade away until called for. I am not the center of my life. I am not the creative force I would like to believe I am. I am not dust, I am not change, I am a body of desolate sand. I am wind. I am time. I am the cathedral for cobblestones and grime, for mice and lyme, where ticks bring their dead. I am made up of plastic-y things, of rubber and glue, of children drinking wine. I am the migraine, the headache, the bile before the stew. I am blue, not copper, orange not turquoise. I scratch my skin and bite my nails and regret my seven tattoos. I reject the easy way out. I shouldn't. However, I'm too scared my identity is forged in the money I spend. I shake at the cost. I eat the fish who feeds me. I wallow in regret. I wallow in steam, and steam lingers to be wallowed in. I wallow in emotions I proposed for my own damn self. I wallow in the tumor in my aunts back, in the unrecoverable, in the fear of paralysis forever.

sweet starlight, caress  
the hare who stays up late.  
she eats for one now

## the pool players

*after gwendolyn brooks*

Pool gripped  
the boys last summer.  
What an odd thing to be in!

Debonair boys clamored in summer  
halls, splayed out  
on green. They hooked  
their knees on  
the velvet so that we  
could see those tender,  
secret parts of their legs.  
They drank red  
stripe and pacifico  
and mingled  
at the chalk boards  
and circled round and  
round and round  
the tables and they never danced.

They made sport of it,  
I guess you could say.  
They shattered pool,  
into just sticks and balls,  
like everything else.

## Last Week

I fed those dogs again.  
Although one sees a soul through their whites,  
the corners of my eyes corrode and rend.

Where I live, there's a roving pack of hounds,  
and although they threaten mange in vicious bites  
I fed those dogs again.

Reluctantly, I shaved my lunch in two  
and they fall over each other like dappled autumn light  
while the corners of their eyes corrode and rend

and what could a boy with a beer be,  
(other than sardonic) against the weight of this night?  
until I remember when I fed those dogs again

and I finally found myself in a bathroom,  
where my mouth doesn't stink of mange and fight. still, I am  
scared of the corners of my eyes that corrode and rend

I might only decide to walk home up a new street  
in a morning's stark and pragmatic light,  
and though the corners of my eyes corrode and rend  
I know I fed those dogs again.

## haibun bar review

*talon*

i drank myself silly and even smoked the cigarette in my boot i put the this afternoon that i said i would never smoke under any circumstance, all in order to write some poem about the spins, like being there would help my writing. i cracked my head open, or at least it feels like it. my vision is, uh, fine. it's like drowning, rushing and vapid eye motion across orange-lighted bars (unreciprocated). i'm nothing, just string between shoes just string holding up jeans just string in places where it's much too weak to be. my friends, they dance some carrion dance and neglect me in the pool of myself, and im much too hot and i'd like to dig gashes into my skin in a type of way, but i lack the constitution. i never had it to begin with i suppose. my friend, she hops down from the rafters or wherever vultures go, and i bare my chest to her, covered in a benign rash. she winces. she has hair like wild grasses and golden glasses and, oh! another cigarette for me. i melt!

nighttime knows the way

to grapple boys in darkness

and make them feel spring

## city boy 2

On his bike, city boy follows the train tracks home. He knows that no one on the train would like him, but he also knows that if he strays too far from the train lines, he'll be lost in the ephemeral fathoms of century-old stones and caramel colored homes. So he rides his bike that has blue handles and squeaks when he brushes the front brake. The brake pads are too close to the wheel, and the metal itself might need anointment, but city boy doesn't have wrench nor oil for such a ceremony. Not here. Some city boy he is.

The sky stays gray, and as the roads become inhospitable, city boy reluctantly takes to the sidewalk, where he pedals slower than a pedestrian instead of dismounting and joining their mass. They still wear their mean glares. City boy wears a face that says, *you must take pity on me, for I, too, am scored, back and body alike. We dine along the same rats, know the same rankle and rush.* They can smell the salt in city boy's throat; it's been building up in pockets for years.

while the bassist takes a drink,

You know there's nothing elegant in the way you walk, my dear.

You catch smoke in passing, latch hope upon some poor  
match-holder that they might dive after your little steps.

It's humiliating.

Well, now I, too, have struck quite the run in my tall-drink book.

Cradle this bind, and when you next dip, remember who was your first waltz partner.

## deer poem

my mother is known as avenging, and at the risk of speaking untrue, she sips in rivers and samples wild weeds in the spring, when they're fresh with dew. i thought i hit her with my toyota 4runner last summer, at intersection of muir fire road. late sun, lilting night, but really i'm still unsure as i sped off towards taller and deeper forests. if only there were lightning bugs on the west coast, i might have seen that body, so ravaged by time that the maggots were eating it even before i dipped my hand in. instead, i raced away to smoke cigarettes in better company.

later, they would laugh and sing and golden light would pour from their eyes. they would pack in on the fire escape steps. night would feel like day, and they would say that i was always meant to kill my avenging mother. i'm not so sure.

i do not hate my mother. she was known as avenging. i am known as well.

on going home

You've never seen an eucalyptus before.  
I tried to explain that they were not native here, either,  
but you're too busy picking up the long strip-like leaves.  
Rippled shadows fell from on high, and the canopy made a mosaic of the sky.

Where we live, it's that sort of place that wants us dead.  
Here is where I was born. Here, there's a magnolia as old as I am.  
Here, forever-long light ripples and the trees grow like they mean it.  
Here, eucalyptus makes a great open cathedral.  
It's a good place to cry, but what else?

city boy

City boy, where do you fall  
where do you wade?

City boy, does the cement get to you  
does the sentimentality ever get the best of you?

City boy, when you go to Ocean Beach at 8pm  
and strip to the nude

when one foot drags the other

raw in the sand's grain

when your fingers turn blue,

Know that to feel love is to feel warmth in your body

in your antibodies boldly fighting a cold

So wade in the icy tide, City boy,

Drowning in the cold and dipping in the blue

City boy, as though saturn has supercollided in your eyes, you're blind to  
who loves you most but your very own blood in your body

That's why you bite the city mouse in two,

score its ribs with your teeth and swallow its liver

that's why you wade in the icy tide lover

City boy, where are you lost

where too are you scored?

City boy, how is it, when you gargle the ocean in your lungs, that you care to speak still

how jellyfish float in your throat and barnacles sprout from your cracked lips

City boy, what loves you standing nude in the mirror,

robbed, red, dirty lunged and voice like an avalanche

City boy, where your hair's slicked back and dripping

where your belly is lumped and rancid and boundless at once

where your nails are yellow and perfectly geometrically twisting

where your cheeks are two blue bruises

You're Gothic, City boy

## summer poem

at rest  
in and amongst the circumstances  
at rest, when can i hug you, grasp your shoulderblades  
your breast ribs at rest

let your second person be a dream of some determined hand in hand

for three, now we  
have grown like cicadas in the afternoon, now we  
becomes you and i and a chestnut tree  
in my backyard

who is the cicada's mother but sound,  
but light, but we, louder together

## stone block poem

people continue to fail to be abstracted  
I noticed the stone blocks at dumbo, their  
chill on my warm hand I notice my warm  
hand I noticed the cold of the stone. There's  
nothing left, people continue to resist  
abstraction. I notice my sister, she drips in  
my words, light and relentless. I notice my  
sister fails to be abstracted someone new drips  
in my words. The stone resists to be noticed,  
fails to be noticed, resists abstraction. I  
notice my sister there's nothing left. Why  
can't she be warm? Why can't she notice?  
When does she fail to be abstracted I notice  
abstraction, I notice its dissimilarity to stone.  
My sister notices my warm hand there's  
nothing left I block I balk at the prospect  
of noticing, of abstracting, of letting  
abstraction be too warm, to drip my words  
to let my words drip with warmth.