

part one: this inconsistent fragility or, writing poetry with the women incarcerated in the sf county jail and being able to walk out the doors afterwards.

it is a wing. it is two wings.

it is many counted and a territory unmapable.

we place spaces to signify having been placed in space.

and why here?

it is night.

mention it is night.

how the stars are where you are.

the day starts off truncated.

and this inconsistent breathing.

something like,

to unsay one has to care about

what one is not saying.

how confined. how molded to designation.

and as the train made the hair fly off the forehead

the one speaking said,

its as if the distance were all around your body

and we begin to get worried.

not wondering yet where it went.

it being an expression of standing still.

how we've known it.
by the looks of it.
a body found.
a body. as it is reached for at the edge,
which it did not cross.
which was also indecipherable,
tracing a language.
which does not mean
that we are unaccompanied.
the old man steps out
to urinate in one direction.
a train passes. and slips.
a case of bourbon in the trunk.
is it our loss or its own?
the sink threatening with its murky water.
everyone refusing baptisms.
and in the end, taking one step out.
as least, by the looks of it.

and all the ways it was transformed
when it took flight.
rooted barnacle sold
in the red marketplace.
how that happened.
how it happened that she was red, too.
becoming angled, as a color.
and she is sold off, piece by piece.
carrying the smell of a wing.
two wings. carrying many of them.
and the wires across that which it calls out.
the faces slowly changing shape.
becoming other that what was helped into becoming.
held still by not remembering.
and how the stars are, over there,
where it is day.

part two: we are scanning in refusal to settle on the whole image

sometimes the conversation veers off and staggers in a different direction, sometimes swallowed whole by silence. to mouth the words ocean, or dream, or limbo is like how gravity is always what we expect but it always surprises us. I feel I should stop or the habitual repetition of words and shapes and sounds is like throwing up in my mouth and swallowing it down again. if someone else could come through me, if I could hear something else, and how to know when the cycle has ended? some questions have no answers and we are used to never admitting that we don't know so the answer is when a new one begins. always comes back to ability, doesn't it.

I feel myself being counted while moved outside a landscape. it is done too quietly. and with no light. how in writing a letter we might end with putting you back together bone by bone across the long night. I'm sharing a bed already and this sharing becomes a consequence of loving inside containers of scarcity. how this is like the process of naming a country as itself and how that delineates who is and is not us. like not being able to think of anything that is not-something without thinking of the original something. as in not us in reference to us. a woman cries in front of the room while reading a love letter and she was different when the others did not raise their eyes to cross the boundary. not us. not of the same deserving matter. after sixteen years the recipient of the letter is sent to arizona where another waiting period begins, this time under a jurisdiction of extraction. no one left across the fence but at least across the fence is not a cage above a salty sea, right? I think we are trying to think about why we so deeply need to be singular things and where we were taught that this kind of singularity was more necessary than any other kind.

I don't know land and neither did the people I came from, and if I had I would have been already removed from it by the fact of birth and death which is the one function still connected to a sense of what is larger and unnamable. if one is born in the caul and is a glowing orb breathing in water what becomes of distinguishing characteristics. a woman unlearns being cloaked and then wonders how to still exist as her own cloaking. when she arrives to where I am standing I can't say any of the things I've waited so long to say to her. it takes nearly three days of packaged food to admit how hard the holding has been. like when everything looks like it is in exactly the right configuration that's when we need to start asking the questions. how do you know that you can't love into a framework of abundance? I tell her what I have known and haven't had any other reason to say, riding between peninsula and unpacked boxes. our sheets are green. I'm not sure I like them, not because I don't like green, but because it begins to feel like every other shade is excluded in getting used to and no longer noticing the green below my skin in the short nights when everything is quiet and just fine.

I'm trying to say that I'm tired and far from home. I sleep on trains and in chairs. then, listening to the radio there are people using voices that sound like they are arguing even when they are not arguing with one another. a man calls in and his voice is broadcast. he has a stutter which makes me think he's had a recent loss, a sudden disappearance of a thing that he keeps looking for, like he can't remember where he put it and he needs it. I bite my tongue around a blueberry and offer her one, and the other man being broadcast who accepted the call says murder but says it just like he says all his other words. the milk tastes sour which makes me remember that it's my turn to clean out the fridge and that I need to call my mother. when she answers she says that another one of the boys from the neighborhood is having a funeral next week. I love you is a tulip spelled correctly.

a sense that it is always dark, which means we are gripping. last time I saw her she was moss untouched, and reaching an arm upward, I knew I should be doing something else, at least sleeping. but with all these images running around and all the time spent looking at photos of other people there comes a swirling across my eyes, which she asks about, and even though I don't tell her about the ways I long for things that I've taught myself to believe I cannot have, she knows there is something underneath. I am noticing the effects of being alone for a while, a shipwreck believing in amber. ok. I've said quite enough. I love you. goodnight. a tulip spelled correctly. and we leave the room empty but for two voices arguing and not with each other.