

Oldham County

Concrete spasm of wet heat, fountain muching
up to smack the sun. Slings kids around. How
unresisting in our glittering suits, shifting like
the sea moves, we hear. High summer hiss. Cicada
spit and skins. A place that can't stop licking clean the jar
of its own stomach. Who gets the couch? Uncle
David with his yellow dentures is dying, for instance,
in a moldy log cabin alone. Outside the dogs'
chainpost leans a little comely, swamped in lampshine,
if I recall. David of the long jaw hoisted me
on his shoulders while I swung the glow-in-the-dark
tube *whoooooing* and asking and topped Halloweenly
with a grinning skull. Who gets the truck—no need
to get so worked up—but anyhow? The river filled
to its cheeks with rain last week and kept swelling.
Whole blocks gulped up, all the fountains and the
children with them. A lost doe leapt over the Belvedere
handrail. It started to swim. Such a long time
to act like you aren't drowning. Who gets
the house? Careful now, the yard is tricky
in the low light. A pox of holes. Bulbs
of blue cabbage press up where the creek
keeps the grass drunk but hardly moves. Look,
for instance, at David, snapping stones at raccoons
with a mere slingshot. The dogs are cratered,
melting into the yard. Moon smears the roof. Who
will ladder up to scrub it clean? To be home is to be
sickening. I ran around and around the fountain
like a sling charging up. I waved my arms from
the loft of his shoulders at some better boat.
Dregs of spidered cotton clung to our clothes all the way
home, all the way home as the river unscrolled
its tongue. Something else to swallow.