

Senescence

I.

My grandmother said that
time pulls stronger than gravity.
Use it wisely and it will
launch you to the escape velocity
needed to go

past the pull of dimly lit streets
past the pull of the rounded Earth
past the pull of deep gray craters
past the pull of abounding lost objects
past the anthropocene.

I say there is no way
to tell time except by
the stages gravity forces
a laggard and aging body to endure.

First, her cheeks hung low—
loosely restrained to flesh;
they pulsated waves
when she spoke. Then,
her limbs no longer
agile, lengthened by their own weight.
Their skin, too, languid.

When my grandmother died
life shifted beyond conception.
Now, there lies a truth
in the endings and transformation—
cells stretched beyond capacity.

II.

My body is frightened
of what lies beyond the porch.
My skin hides only in the corner
of the kitchen

with no high shelves,
no glass cups, no knives;
only canned goods with
pull tabs.

Conceding to this egregious violation
of existence demands more
shrewdness than I am capable.
Therefore I shall build a moat
around the porch and eat
sweet corn and peaches
in the kitchen corner,
where the light shines
between 8 and 9 AM.

Navigating a Deadlock

This morning I brewed coffee
and even baked biscuits in preparation.

The paper whitens more by the minute.
The pen's ink slowly stales.
I count the cars passing by.

It seems like today
no new worlds invite me in.
I shrink with shame between these crossroads.

Perhaps tomorrow
I'll brew more coffee,
and bake more biscuits,
but this time to share.

Playtime

Yes, the earth is round.
However, my little brother only believes
in walls—towering planks protecting
our house, the oak tree in the backyard, and
the green and red speckled succulent,
still only a baby, which
we desperately nurture
like the three flowers we kept before.
Each one now
a decaying lesson.

When I ask about his adventures
beyond the gate,
he talks of streets painted red
and fiery dragons echoing unanswered roars.
He takes my hand gently
with his chubby little fingers
clutching my pinky.

“Please,” he says, “don’t go.”

I don't go.
We plan our journey within
these splintering brown walls,
and he is the great explorer
who knows where
the slain dragons lie—
deep under the sand pit
overgrown by weeds.

We pretend that the earth is flat,
that we are safe,
and that the stray bullets
whizzing through the wet summer air
are just make believe.