The Door

I watched how I passed the trees:
in the distance, color
would come into view,
vibrations ushered by light
from beyond the known
into the felt, flowering
into hazy trunk and canopy,
flowering falling short of definition
having neared and passed too quickly.
The green skin of mangoes
is clothed by dust and dew borrowed
from memory, from slowing down
one day by the countryside
to feel the earth breathe,
rest in its flowering shade.
The blur that speed has left in the mind
is varnished over for me to come in, see clearly
and feel the tree’s rough skin,
linger my touch long enough
the ants journey on my finger thinking
I am part of the fruit-bearing shade,
linger long enough light impresses
its high definition into a warm place
within me—yet I was certain
only of the sky bathing the canopies
auburn, mottled by early evening.

Suddenly, I am passing by a house
two years ago, going through its open door.
I look in, but it ends too quickly,
the visible is barely made out.

The frame blurs having reached its brink
as though one had reached the river floor
and moved the sediments into unrest,
into a mist one ingests in the vacuum
of the past, forcing one to resurface
into a car seat, into warm Sunday
light, staring at the passing scenery.

After recall, the heart takes over.

The curtains are weaved into familiarity
against the frenetic pace of the world
keeping the peered into whole. The door
resembles something akin to passion.
The curtains veiling the adjacent field
open into the swaying rice paddies,
each head with its own music.

Had I stopped and entered, I’m sure
I would have seen it more clearly,
a life. At the crude door
through which light flowed,
a young girl appears
and smiles, looks into me as she asks what
my business is, opens her life as she opens
the already opened door, holds my heart
as she holds my hand ushering me in,
in introduction.

“Nothing, go on.”

The sea melds with the shore.
The cliff’s updraft shows us
our place, high up the world below
is a blotched canvas, forms blurring
into haze that only color is discernible,
one running into another as sight

loses itself in the stretch of height.
You wanted me to take your picture
just near enough the edge of the water
could be seen. There, hold still.
I looked down and saw the shore
letting itself be softened, enough

the waves become a part of its fine,
long body, the beach a creature
of earth and air, which we term only

as beautiful—smile,
hold still. Stop moving. Another
with the lovely shore, you say.

But as we admired the view,
I thought of giving myself over
to the air, if gravity’s impression
over my falling body
would let the haze of sand and saltwater
creep into me, assimilate me

the same way the photograph of you
letting the wind compose your hair
would breathe between us

communion. A rock I kick over falls
like the mind lets fall into its world
uncertainty, one it fears

and loves, taking you by the hand
to see it up close—your blue face
rocked by the waves,

the roused sand, quiet in its rhythm
of erosion. I hand you your camera,
hand myself over to whistling

rushing from wherever land.
You say the beaches down south are divine.
You ask what’s wrong, and I say,

“Nothing, go on.”

**On the Trip Back Home**

Father tells of a creature whose body is a shadow.
Without glancing at the fields we pass,

he says it moves toward the sun when it starts
to set, without being seen, slipping out of the shade

when the leaves rustle, or with a passing flock of birds.
That month, the roads were being made and unmade.

Headlights would flood the dirt road, enfleshing dust
in the midst of engine heat and jackhammers. People
within their cars gazing towards the nearest future, within their homes, or some stretch of quiet road to pass the darkness off. “Your taxes at work,” the signs say. “Sorry for the inconvenience.”

I think about the green flag a worker waves when it is time to move, industrial work lights coating it with energy, moving metal and flesh into a current, progressing the parts, the stories of each part, people walking beside the road carrying children and beer, grateful for the temporary vision the nearing election has bestowed. We came upon a stretch with plains on each side, few trees, warm vibration of wild bushes in evening wind, as though something were trying to break free. Far off, blue was being eaten by time, into dark blue, into maroon, into delayed sigh, to solitary points in the dreamscape sky, which kills the thing, Father says, or makes it sink deeper into that of which it is a shadow. The rest of the trip home were fine roads roughened to make room for another three-year passage. I stared at every tree, especially the young ones, the ones whose shades were only years old, the ones to which moonlight was a fond acquaintance. Had I stared long enough, I would have seen them lose their souls, a thin membrane breaking off from the fringes of trunks and branches, struggling outward at a slightly brighter color, restless and stubborn, wicked, lost, filled with wanderlust. Breaking off to attempt a revolution, or start a war.
On a Sketch of Endymion and Selene

In finding a way in, the heart
shatters, its whole vision
bathing the leaves

with return, shattering
through the canopy
as moonlight, shrapnel

on the ground,
some embedded in pieces
of flesh heaving

with repose. There, the lips,
the chest, the loins,
the weaving the mind does

pre-word—and when we say
body, referring to the young
man, his hair emanating brown

in the invisible, the woman
shedding from herself
the palpable to enter

his dream, the air gets colder,
our feet become heavy.
There, the same

field and tree. The same
waiting, the eyes
of the heart scanning the body

it has weaved
into the knowable
for a place where its gaze

can be met,
where introduction
can take root … Her heart
sheds over a field trying to grow.
   The seeds vine
      into a silhouette the wind carries

into the shade
   as would a breeze
      in cool summer night, moon shade

unto leaf froth
   without shattering the darkness.
      Where are you,

the eyes ask, whose
   is the wordless asking, gaze
      of inquiry, that question

to which we reveal
   our own face
      and say we are

here, we are similar, analogous,
   stardust. In the real,
      resplendent and alone,

the gaze wanders
   into exodus, the reply
      restless, unembraced. The gaze never

bridging them
   into a phase beyond searching
      for the possibility

of a future. That night,
   crickets could heard
      in the world. The heart whispers

into an ear
   it has created
      from memory, and

in the dream the leaves
   are swaying by how
      she breathes, falling
the way her voice falls
with every end
of song. The tree which greets him
as he wakes (where, which place?)
is leafless, the sky full
and pornographic.