

Mt Solomon

On the journey to God, my husband pulls out
a matchstick. It is dark outside.
Too late for even the crickets.
Too late to remember where we rest now,
which river has vanished beneath us.
His hands are shells I wear over mine,
each callous a city we have visited, abandoned.
The city of shame: his mother left behind in the winter rain,
face thick with a soot we could not wipe down.
After two months, his ribs poking holes into mine.
The city of hunger: The first time I had to kill to eat,
the rabbit's body was heavier
than my own as I brought it to the fire.
Where does our unholiness go when we can no longer carry it?
Does it brown and come undone like all living things do?
Does it hurl into darkness or flesh like retribution, overdue?
Retribution: the horizon and how it kisses the field into silence.
My husband's hand pulling away from mine. How cold the air is.
His body first a silhouette, then a shadow, then gone.
How I still love him. Nothingness, a click, and then nothingness
again. How the stars have shut their eyes tonight.
A stillness in the wind. How we allow ourselves to think nothing
of our impurity though little fires grow all around us.
How a voice that is neither God's nor an angel's
whistles through the trees singing *rest now, rest now.*

April, losing

My father lost his hair in the river.
No, this was not a dream.
After spring, the riverside that once
fell like ash between our fingers
would harden like teeth.
The water we were once glutinous with
stirred with the taste of what would be fall—
seedy strawberries kicked beneath
our moth-eaten porch, hymn books
gathering dust by father's bedside,
mother's voice a wisp of what it used to be back then.
Back then: I spent Sunday mornings
sleeping in the backseat of a van instead of
listening to father sing in the church choir.
Back then: When I couldn't notice the little things.
The way he stopped cutting garlic with
the butcher knife, instead fumbling for a tomato blade,
how the pastor no longer took off his shoes during visits,
how everything — mother's wooden comb
she put in his briefcase just in case,
father's CD player reserved only for Jesus and Debussy—
seemed to shrink without warning.
Back then: when I believed in
everything and nothing.
That April morning, after the pastor submerged father into the river,
he did not move. The river stood still & hopeless
except for a few small slits of night,
splitting and spreading, fickle and untouchable
as I ran down to gather them,
the fool I was.