

Taking the Metro Home After the Wake

Late afternoon —

I ride the bus past the hospital where my father was born
and into the city market. Pantries ferried from garden
to city street. Jellied pomegranates. Common
apples. Grocery bags filled with interesting promises.
You can feel it all over town, clouds spreading dusk,
sun moving through tall buildings like a hot pulse.
Ten miles south a Civil War statue tells me exactly where
the Gettysburg of the West was fought.
What was once a battleground is now a neighborhood
of well kept houses. Quiet flowerbeds that have earned
their address. Painted Ladies. Stone porch
bungalows. Deep in the spine of Westport Street small bones
fossilize into a petrified constellation. Some people depart
without a sound. A young mother boards,
her baby warm in her arms. A stranger stands
and offers his seat. There is still some good left
in this world. I am told we are at war,
though I can't see it from where I stand. Still,
there is so much I want to know,
like how a river becomes a broken body of sea,
how each season tenders up a different kind of light, how the birds
hold every shade of nightfall beneath their wings.
The horizon flattens as it gathers its echo in. Stars not yet visible.
Yesterday's moon must be far into the dark
of another country by now, circling back as it always does.