

BECAUSE WHEN I SPEAK CHEROKEE IN PUBLIC IT MAKES SOME FOLKS
NERVOUS

TODAY'S HISTORY LESSON WILL BE WRITTEN
BY ANTS
UNDER THE BARK OF A TREE
IN TILDEN PARK.
I WON'T KNOW HOW TO READ IT EITHER.

THIS FOG IS NOT
AN UNFAMILIAR FOG.
THE AFTERNOON'S WIND
HOT IN THE VALLEYS
WILL NOT BE UNFAMILIAR.
IN AUGUST THE
DIE OFF OF PAINTED LADIES
BUTTERFLIES PILED LIKE LEAVES
NOT UNFAMILIAR.
MORE BLACK THAN COPPER
ONE BLEACHES IN THE CAFE WINDOW
TONGUE CURLED
EYE SECTIONED INTO TINY MATTE BLACK TILES
GESTURED LIMBS
ARRESTED.

THAT GUY ACTUALLY LOOKED AT ME AS IF
I WOULD KNOW WHAT IT MEANT.
I LIVE HERE
NOW
LISTEN FOR THE OPENING OF PARKING PLACES,
MEASURE SPACE IN TINY MATTE GREY TILES.
THESE CALENDARS AREN'T COMPLETE
CEREMONIAL DATES COME
GRADUALLY INTO FOCUS.
SOME THINGS HERE ARE SO NEW THAT
NOTHING HAS FIGURED OUT HOW TO EAT THEM YET.

I HEAR US SINGING

THIS MORNING'S SONG FOR THOSE BORN
TO OTHER PEOPLE'S DREAMS
SO UNLIKELY
A FUNNY, LINGERING FOG
LIKE SPIES
WE KNOW EACH OTHER
IN THE LINES FOR THE BANK MACHINES
WHILE BUYING BOOKS OR COFFEE
OUR EYES CLASP AND SLIDE
NO ONE ELSE THE WISER

WE SING THESE MORNING SONGS
AT THE SITES OF PIPED CREEKS
SOMETIMES EVEN AT THE DRINKING FOUNTAIN
TOUCH OUR FACES WITH WATER
AND SING
I SAW YOU SINGING NEAR THE ART MUSEUM
STONE BLUSHING RED FROM NEW LIGHT
WE FELL INTO BRIEF DUET
ANONYMOUS, LOVING
CLANDESTINE

HARD TO KNOW IF WE WERE
WHAT THEY'D HAD IN MIND
PLANNING ALL THE WHILE
FOR US, NOT FOR THEMSELVES
SUCH A RESPONSIBILITY
THINGS WASH UP ON THE SHORE
DIG THEMSELVES INTO THE EDGES OF RIVER OUTLETS
WE CAN FIND THEM THERE
I CAN HEAR YOU SINGING
SOME MORNINGS

HOW TO BE ONE OF THE PEOPLE

DAD SENDS ME A POLITICAL JOKE
THROUGH E-MAIL
HE IS NORTH EASTERN OKIE TERSE
CAN SEE THE FAMILIAR MOUTH QUIRK
THE DUCK BEHIND A FOREHEAD CURL
I RETURN TO THE 70S

HIDE NIGHTGOWNS
HOPING
I'LL GET DADDY'S T-SHIRT INSTEAD
SOFT, WHITE
SMELLING OF OLD SPICE
PIPE SMOKE OR CIGARETTES
BEER OR CANE ALCOHOL

DAD SHIPPED OUT TO NAM
MID DR. NO
ON AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER
A VOLUNTEER
GESTURED BRAVERY
GENETIC POSSIBLY

GRAMPS DID IT TOO
CHASED ROMMEL AROUND NORTH AFRICA
HE COULD DO TRIG IN HIS HEAD
WAS STATIONED IN GERMANY
WHILE DAD WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL
LOVED MY GRAN WITH A LIGHT
THAT EMBARRASSED MY TEEN YEARS GRAMPS
DIED OF LEAD AND CADMIUM IN THE WATER

DAD QUIT SMOKING FOR MY KIDS
STILL TALKS LIKE A SMOKER
PAUSES
LICKS AN UPPER LIP
VOICE RUMBLING
READS LIKE AN OXFORD DON
STILL FEELS UNCOMFORTABLE
IN UNIVERSITIES
I DID MY DEGREE FOR DAD

ON ONE TRIP TO A LIQUOR STORE
I MUST HAVE BEEN AROUND 3
COUNTER GUY SAW MY BLOND CURLS
MY BROWN DAD'S BLACK ONES
ASKED ME IF HE WAS REALLY MINE
LATER DAD TAUGHT ME TO SEE
THE FUNNY IN THE SAD
GENTLY GRACEFUL
A FEATURE I SEE IN MY CUBS
IF NOT IN MYSELF

DAD SHOWED ME HOW TO BE ONE OF THE PEOPLE
ONE NIGHT HEADING FROM TULSA TO
PICHER
IN A RENTAL CAR
DARK
NEITHER OF US TALKING
KING OF THE ROAD
ON THE RADIO
HEAT THICK AIR
SOUND OF TIRES MEASURING GRAVEL

A BLANKET AS MAP

ART IS TERRITORIAL
THESE ASSEMBLIES OF THINGS
COLLECTED FROM MY WORLD
LIFTED FROM YOURS AND REWORKED
UNTIL THEY HAVE A PLACE IN MINE
NO LESS A STATEMENT THAN THE CAT
FACE RUBBING SCENT MARK
MIGHT FEEL GOOD
MIGHT FLATTER
PURR MIGHT PLEASE
DON'T BE FOOLED
THIS IS ABOUT TURF
THESE BLOODY PAWPRINTS
I STITCH ACROSS OUR SHARED QUILT