

Reverse Shadow

I wake most mornings
to a pink slash
behind the foothills.
A celestial parade,
a drum line of rose,
the raw meat of day rising
from the cold blue black
of unheard. From here,
it's the best I can do:

the big mountain hidden
behind a fir tree
belonging to a neighbor
I'll never meet. We live
separated by an alley where
Thursdays, dogs take turns
scaring garbage trucks
back towards the road.
After school, kids play
until one of them decides
there is more to life
than agreeing on the rules.

A screen door slams,
but not much more.
His lawn is overgrown

and gorgeous in its wildness.
He seems unconcerned
about critters who tear
into his trash cans between
Thursdays. We see each other
sometimes. We never look
into one another's eyes.

How to Murder Your Son

take him to the mountaintop
but don't look him in the eye

if you can
tell him the truth

about the great power
the universe has

let him remark upon the weather
as you climb the mountain

let him say something nice
about his mother

let him pick
flowers along the path

let him believe in the water
they will drink

from the vase she keeps
on the windowsill overlooking the clothesline

tell him how much she will appreciate them
that's not a lie because there is no need to lie

if he asks about dinner, tell him
if he asks about evening prayer, tell him

let the world that belongs to him

belong to him

let him ask you why you are turning left
when you normally turn right

let him ask why the clouds and why the low thunder
let him ask why the cave and why the altar

lay him on the altar
without touching his hand

without looking him in the eye
explain the great power

the universe has how it speaks
to you and how you can't risk ignoring it

select the blade, the handle
or select the open hand, the neck

if he tries to get up, let him
let him walk out if he wants

he won't get far in the darkness
let him call out to the storm

and beg for mercy
and let him see if he gets it

if he doesn't, it's okay,
he was born

with an altar already inside him
for the rest of his life he will never stand

with his back to you
that's all right because the great power

the universe has has your back
and he will grow out of it

and grow into some mighty thing
the way the roots of an oak

move fence posts and sidewalks
and he will learn patience

is the great power the universe has
and at some point when the voice intervenes

and calls the whole thing off
don't be surprised

if you consider doing it anyway
don't, instead

take from him the flowers
he picked for his mother

and ask him to help you
hold still the screaming ram

Blood Moon

Through reflections of indoors
half shaded by Earth,
the hall light on so I can see,
its belly lightening up the ridge,
nobody's lights up on the street behind us,
everybody in the apple crisp night with dogs
uneasy in the streets, talking on phones
or to each other, waiting
for the sun to return.

What reflections?

A tendril hanging plant,
the threshold in this room,
the threshold into the other,
bed sheets of concentric circles,
the mic stand, the popschutz, the skyline shadow
of an unkempt desk, my own shadow body
of gray and hidden features, legs
crossed, a book in my lap:
so much in here to see
that I barely even look
at the moon, bloody and eclipsed
and when she comes in
and asks: *why are you sitting in the dark?*
I don't know where to begin.

If I make it to the next one (2033),

will I recall this poem and scramble
through some basement box for the book
I wrote it in? This poem I will likely lose
that I wrote on my mother's birthday,
just like an eclipse itself:
rare and remarkable.
Really, how could I ever forget?