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Class of 2023

Title: Waiting to be seen

Genre: Poetry

Yé'u

after the essay Nothing to Hide Under All This Sun

“The Vietnamese word for *love*
and *weakness* is the same: *yé'u*.”

The verse says love me more,
you say I physically cannot.

Loss is what I smell today
in the jasmine kitchen cabinets:

Jasmine, receptacle of grief

Autotheory, this.

I tell people—everyone
who listens really—to comply

with this process of erasure

The Shrapnel Is Called Afterlife

I produce a collage of objects

like my inherited tree sticks,

a zip-tie, two ounces of endeavor

one statement on grief redolent

of The Shrapnel. Mendez notes

dearth becomes sustenance,

briefly gorgeous this, fish sauce

and an addiction of fish sauce

and a newspaper underneath

fish bones, too many fish.

Today I learn of hegemonic culture

and Black churches,

mauve bruises and mariposas.

How the framework of the verse

is a glass jar. In it,

a jasmine flower

sixteen petals and hairpin

Enough meditation

to drive my grandpa to

hug me, mat my doorstep

with fallen leaves

enjambment entanglement

two sides of a fish this.

Planetaria

after the Uvalde massacre and Monica Ong's exhibition Planetaria

tell me where this will go:
an angular pit car looming on
an indigo field
 in it a volvelle structure
first seen in the Arabic world
and a prediction:
the lunar phase
what's for dinner tonight?
shape of a woman who's calling his bluff

tell me what precedes me
and how to persevere, shimmer
in terrible wreckage (this)

come home, the kids miss you
the kids the kids the kids the
centuries of elegiac meditation
now lost to this rotating disc
date/time and the body follows

a planetaria and all us stars
random compositions and rivulets
a sculptural mess, a surprise
waiting in these graduating wings
come home, the kids miss you
them stars subliminal, taking flight

Excess fire and all this rain

baby it's easy to cling to hope
like chubby fingers on
styrofoam trees you buzzing
and my face, red read these
lines lanes loans mortgage
says hold on baby the world
is an oil pot: few hairs matted
down praying to God
let this lint roller unstick
tissue shreds from pilling
paper coats, numbers on tags
more movement less music
baby all love ends once you
see my shower head
that pressure these feet
no conditioner heat waves
with no air conditioning
baby you're never home now,
nicotine rising above your
lips, volcano hell
the mailman says hi to our
garage then leaves
two shells one spittle nothing
ever really dry
baby this love tastes like
tylenol screw me loose
burn me all the way down
listen, how we morphed into
hot mantle plumes, golden
chains fixing us in the air
oh baby wish you were here
keepin' me steady
oh baby hold me still

A quick sharp tang called envy

recent searches include:

girls, the ones my boyfriend loves,
silver and green with baseball caps
and a field of blank spaces,

olive stains on purple
lichens known because
of close observation

i read an article about Rembrandt
and some religious allegory,
how to dress like her even if
the subject has a large right arm
but Rembrandt was a draftsman
and so am i

recent searches include:
“corporeal space” and textures

how each sentient body
is sensorially aware of itself
and my central thread
in the most gnomic form
is how i sink deeper into her
/they/ and this human drive
my verse thrashing from the ego

amped

rainbow light on the window
single planetoid fish tentacles out
 no, just a street lamp
 no, just a shadow of you
silence falling like bombs in the ocean
a wave metaphysical abstract
periglacial landscape no tennis shoes
muddy, asteroid from the rain
 no, just liminal space
 no, just drown me

belief is an abstract concept today
we talked about religion in your tesla
toast coming in adverbial crunches
this was it, spacial time we were both
here on a sidewalk on a roof in a pew
with a burning village holy trinity
the cross to your right right you said
 no, just want a bit of love
 no, just leave me here with God

while the crowd in the sea drops
avana religion store sings and sings
satellite gate south geese negative
inconsolable there is no how come
there is full bloom coming whole
there is song an engine revving
parents still working at the mall
a guilt hollow in clothing racks
crushing me velvet behind the counter
the external boombox on your car
playing concerto welcome

home
welcome to the arena
this universe us
 no, we're just
waiting to be seen