

OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN

In our old backyard my father built a small, one-room house of wood
For my sister to play house in. It had a porch my sister would sweep.
Inside she would cook. I would watch her at her fake stove from outside
Thru the windows. The windows were always open because they had no glass.
There was no door for her to close. Gray shingles decorated the pyramid roof
And as I got older I could climb up on it, lie back with my legs in a short tree,
And try to kick limes off it. No grass would grow below that tree. Beyond it
I could slightly see a swimming pool in the next-door neighbors' backyard
Thru bushes growing over the chain-link fence that went along our property line
Past a bougainvillea and a bird of paradise to the opposite corner of our backyard
Where an immense bush grew. At the bottom of it, weeds that yielded red berries
Year-round also grew. The berries were the size of BBs. They would start green
As grass then fade into a magic mint, lightening until they were almost white.
From white they'd go up the spectrum to their eventual shade, touching on yellow
Then an orange-yellow and after that a plain, rich orange before ripening
Into their final blood-redness. It was then I'd pick them off their stems
And pulverize them with a stick mortar into the dirt perpetually on the menu
At my sister's restaurant run out of her playhouse. I would walk the concoction
Over to her and while doing so I realized that when I walked my arms didn't move.
So I put the berries down, thinking that the reason, but my arms still didn't move
When I walked. And I realized I was like a worm, which diminished me in my eyes,
So I began squinting my eyes out, like a happy face, to look wormlike despite
Knowing worms didn't have eyes. This knowledge was a relief. How lucky
I thought I was to not be like the worms I saw entirely flattened on the sidewalk,
Torn to less of themselves, even though my philosopher at the time was magazines,
And even though my father eventually taught me wonderful things about the naked women
Inside those magazines. For example: in a parking lot or somewhere, my father would point
At a clothed woman and backhand me in the chest so that when I looked to see why
I'd see him pointing at the woman walking to her car, her sizable breasts moving
In step with her as only they could, cresting thus as if weightless, as if entering
And exiting a void. And I couldn't help but beach myself on that void, adhere to it,
Inactive in a way, but the problem was I knew that void was made of something more
Than me, the way a Hawaiian shirt made 100% of rayon didn't quite engulf me
Without touching my skin in certain places, floating about me like an angel.