

## LET

my father be a pregnant palm.  
Or Cesária Évora's voice  
on Christmas with Sodade on her lips.  
Let him be Amílcar Cabral's fist in the air.  
And the pardon for all the stints  
the sun fixed on his baby girl.

Let him be an instrument  
in a jazz song: trombone, bass, and snare.  
The ship carrying his brothers and sisters.  
If rain falls on the land he can't live on,  
let him be a wildflower there.

Be a dancer, be a volcano with good intentions.  
Be thousands of drums shipped to Cape Verde.  
The cell phones, the shirts, and the shoes inside.

Let the sky be my father on his knees.  
Let the sun be my father.  
When the blues melt the sun,  
let me be the words he holds tight.

## STROLOGY *GEMINI*

This week will be like the week your mother disappeared, and your now dead uncle taught you multiplayer solitaire. Bet the money you saved in high school that you will hear the chains falling. Break every chain, the gospel. Commit to thinking in terms outside of your bones. They move. Then they don't. Your insides twerk, up and down, back and forth. Gemini, this week is the accent you have, but refuse to use. It's time to move through life with your head open. Your solitude will roll down the street smoking, using language as a thing with which to shoot. Your throat will feel like a drain. Hair hugging metal. Forget about unclogging; go on with your days. Hide your face from children when crying in public. Your one good uncle will die as you dance on top a table. If you look directly into the sun, document the day anger (your mother) took your hand and did a crazy thing—held it.

## SMALL TOWN & TERRIFYING

If I listen to the news tonight, I won't come.  
On mute the television anchor exchange sounds  
like, Do you remember what you used to do.  
Looks like, Do you remember what we did to you.  
I think the lady anchor's saying, I'm the only  
taste you can describe without referring to notes,  
my scent, the way home without roads. Man  
anchor thinks she needs a new city dipped in holy  
overcast, daily drama, and daily migraines  
false remedied with vinegar, washcloth, cold water.  
If I unmute, I could unfocus the idea of private  
property. In Santo Antão, when a landowner's  
animal wanders into or destroys the garden  
of her neighbor, the owner of the garden seeks  
punishment. I await penalty on his lap.  
In Boston, everybody's plan out is to flip houses.  
I'll pay for the part of my elaborate pretending,  
but there's no faking, I prefer my eggs over easy  
I just can't make them easy for myself.

## **DON'T LEAVE YOUR SMART PHONE AT HOME**

It had not occurred  
to me to hit record  
on vacation. I lugged  
thirteen extra pounds  
best explained as delirium.  
Could not record,  
the waves is technology,  
is experience. My  
experience did not occur.  
Fury so gorgeous  
I knelt on my sun &  
carpet burned knees  
in awe like the dream  
where a guy is being stabbed.  
In front of a crowd,  
bearing witness.

## EVERY YEAR TRYING TO GET MY BODY RIGHT

Frenchmen Street in your pickup truck with the broken rearview and the door I can't open from inside. What's better than New Orleans car smell, scraped toes hanging out the passenger side. I keep the window open in the event I need to summer language my mouth into prayer. A gallon of water, two crawfish sandwiches, twelve years between us. I've got that one good one: God is grace, God is good. Let us thank you for our food. A man I ate before you said, I'm sick and tired of you overfeeding yourself. For breakfast, I used to put my weight into scrubbing the stove. I stay lathered up. I stay far away from home. These languid seconds waiting for you to release me disguised as every year I've spent trying to get my body right. I'm in Brazil now, choking on humid desire, armed with another good one: What doesn't move, flies. Amen.