Unsent
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Joseph Massey

WRACK LINE

2019
Vow

To get by
on awe alone
in an early hour.
The first hour.
The new life.
Poetry—
the condition
within which
all rises and falls.
To allow it
to overcome you.
Soma

I spent spring half-tethered
to a body that was and wasn’t
mine. The form was familiar, but I
dangled beyond it. Was it
the mind, the thing that buzzed—
a sound straining to become
language, caught between blades of light
outshining a flowering pear tree.
I’m whole in summer’s monotone;
I’m flesh in this heat.
I think through this body,
alive on a Friday, on a bench,
watching a wasp dodge traffic.
A wasp dissolving into chalk-white sun.
A dust-colored moth
drifts toward porch light.

The dark is the draft
that lifts it. I

watch it
flail behind the bulb.

The tide of the seen
and the unseen

where the language comes
and goes.

New Moon
Unsent

The shadow of a poem
where a last word reverberates.

Would a world adhere
to an echo. How memory

in its lapse
unsends the poem

and leaves summer
with its present-tense colors

flooding the foreground.
June 5th

Irises, their
indescribable
violet, in bloom
beside a funeral home’s
neglected hedges,
startle me
free
from a dream’s
leftover fog.
Manifesto

Poetry’s enough
to sustain
the day.
Sliced June light
fills a crystal
vase sitting
on a sill’s
cracked white
paint: emptiness
brimming over
a name, blooming into shadow.
June 10th

The seam between cirrus
and cirrostratus clouds
closes in. If blue
were a sound
it would ring out.

It rings
now that it’s gone—

echoing beyond
the slightest thought.
Curbside

Cottonwood
litter spills
into traffic, into sun.

The poem appears
where it always was—

before you.
After Santoka

When rain reminds you
you’re alive—
before it begins to fall.
Mantra

Nothing other
than now—
than this—

white moth
navigating
honeysuckle

ciled around
a wrought iron
handrail.
Plenty

It’s late, the last night
of spring. I read
a dead friend’s poetry
under the amber
of a lamp. I lean in
to listen, as if the page
were her face, as if
the margins might open
and close like a mouth.