

0.

a hike on a summer night  
looking for phosphorescent ghosts  
i remember you followed me  
or else  
someone  
else did

1.

i remember walking up  
to the tallest mountain  
the bottom of it  
hand in hand  
in that moment came disaster  
as the darkness failed to arrive  
luco, lucus, 'radura nel bosco'  
ray in the forest  
where sunlight arrives  
making it sacred for miles  
and miles and until i reach you

2.

hay fever and lemon zest  
you come in strong from the back room  
i can smell it on you  
the dust and the ink  
the history and the salt

jonas was a driver  
who turned the wheels out  
held the lanterns even when  
his fingers burned

here come the ghost lights  
in their non-explanation of sound  
he grew up next to the little devils  
and never said a word

but you, you have no need  
of saints            so you become one  
along the mossy wall tracing  
words carved in youth  
looking for our names  
mine and yours surrounded

by a heart

like saint francis  
you open your palms  
and animals come to you  
tell you secrets          whisper prayers  
looking up you make a smile  
sly and snickering luring me close

3.  
here in the dense hazel, just now, she birthed twins,  
the hope of the flock on bare stones  
i don't often recall that this evil was prophesied to me  
by the oak struck by lightning  
typical thunder to wander alone  
if my mind had not been dulled  
by thoughts of you i'd have built a bridge  
made something sharp  
dashed off to the stream

4.  
foolishly, i thought of the city they call rome  
i thought it was like ours in which we shepherds  
are often accustomed to drive the tender young lambs  
i thought of pups like dogs, kids like their mothers,  
i thought of comparing the great with the small  
i thought of cypress trees among the weeping willows  
i thought of my freedom, my idleness

5.  
you may steal anything from me  
now but not my roses  
they bloom in winter  
along the sides of the road  
then summer here comes  
like a bath  
and you try to pick me up  
you try to hold me down

6.

light comes into the primal scene  
its absence as strong as a vacuum

maybe it is the story of staying with ghosts  
in the woods returning  
to a place you grew up in

light comes as a surprise  
even when expected, anticipated

the apartment on buell street  
with no curtains, with no locks

light comes in a hot box morning  
me pissing on the tent at night  
drunk and in disbelief  
having forgotten the headlamp

i point my finger at her and say:  
make a list of all the animals we've seen  
and she does  
without hesitation  
and sure love is often made in the dark  
but this isn't, she isn't

7.

golden golden golden rushing  
i'd go blind for you  
perverse fantasy of seeing the world  
through your eyes

no time like the present  
for this sorrow, pilgrim

duct tape for your blisters, here  
sugar sweet spittle  
covers your keys and nipples

the anxiety i feel at sunset  
running north and west to avoid it  
what's it called  
it's when the spirits come in

8.

campfire poem:

1 for getting sick with a belly ache, a faker  
1 making bananas, melt with chocolate and marshmallows, in the fire  
1 lesbian love affair, rather fantasy of one, long locks, longing  
1 stealing a bird call, quack quack quack  
1 reading a book alone in my tent, repeated affair  
1 about camp smells, see latrines, return to fake belly ache

9.

some say there is a right to wander  
after halifax  
in a kitchen smiling at the ocean  
we set for boston  
camping in an enclosed backyard  
in sommerville my body only  
remembers its bends and curves  
fitting ourselves into suburban constraints  
again it is only the adjusting i remember

10.

past june past july  
so that leaves us with august  
and a beer  
leftover celebration  
dad setting the lawn on fire  
with fireworks  
bought on the side of a country road  
illumination as disregard  
of what  
of this and that  
and the trees and the small  
animals hiding

11.

in the moonlight  
across the ocean  
maine land of wolf eyes  
and imagined matterhorn  
uncle falls

drinks keeps  
balanced on the  
surface

12.  
in the 1970s  
they tell me  
on trips taken before  
i arrive my cousin  
steals babies  
takes lifts them  
from thei campsite  
families like she's trying  
to make a new one  
and they all laugh  
they all  
laugh

13.  
and the setting sun doubles the lengthening shadows:  
yet love burns me: for what limits has love?  
in the evening whip o' whirls  
appear to them too  
waves of presence of the unforgotten  
just a few hundred years has shaped  
all of how we relate to this world  
tell me of the ghost lights in gaza  
tell me of a mediterranean where  
necropolitics is not the politics  
where ghosts are honored  
lights soft and used for reading  
and cooking and tenderness

14.  
gay little camper with yr braids and yr bird whistle  
walking about on a sunday afternoon  
flirt stomp bomb blister  
i'll show you a thing or two  
that excited anxiety  
not bad but nervous  
try to fit our bodies onto a single log  
proto-love first desire at first sight  
i've been carrying this story with me for a hundred years

hotdog i'm homesick  
sundowner ecstasy

15.  
memory buckles  
and we walk to an edge  
dream feels real feels real  
like the film we watched  
crunched up on the couch  
repetition is the only possible road to difference  
tell me you love me  
hand me your poison  
in the sponge-y bath  
my heart beats faster seeing the water run  
down yr shoulder

16.  
remember the time i accidentally drove a stake into yr foot  
remember the time we masturbated competitively by the waterfall  
i read to you all night from that w.s. merwin book  
“through an age of brightness and through shadow”  
the only line i remember  
because it was where you were leading me  
now though only through shadow

17.  
walking humbly  
my hands smell  
elmer's glue and copper  
i like it i sniff  
metal brocade and a swish of yr basketball shorts  
this mountain is all poison ivy and kisses  
doll hair brushes so small they fit in the palm of yr hand  
i think yr great so i make you  
american cheese sandwiches on rye with dijon  
land o' lakes is where we are  
i collected a thousand acorns for you  
barely slept for six nights  
and buried them at the crux of our meeting  
in the forest in thirty years  
bring bread and wine and cheese  
we will lounge beneath shade

made for you, for our love  
so i might say:  
you might have rested here with me tonight  
on green leaves: we have ripe apples,  
soft chestnuts, and a wealth of firm cheeses

18.  
let such ages roll on' the fates said, in harmony,  
to the spindle, with the power of inexorable destiny

19.  
and now the distant cottage roofs show smoke  
and longer shadows fall from the high hills  
it is not lost me that this search can only happen  
because i have the privilege of knowing  
light returns  
for me

20.  
i sit in a tent  
middle class fantasy of glamping  
soft fortress  
AI tent village clean and bordered  
all my life the ghosts flash appear  
without my ever becoming one  
not yet