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Golden Honey

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Golden Honey

In the pews, the whispers say
the Eucharist discs delight

the tongue with a dab of golden honey.
I smell a tart perfume not far away.

There is a nakedness being raked
up and caked against me. I have come

here drunk and contrary, losing myself
in these halls—a hum sways from the podium

dais. I want to meet my maker calmly.
I want to beat my faith off walls.

My father's shadow murmured the Lord's
Prayer whenever I looked above. My eyes

were young and seething. He died at fifty—
shriveled down and minced, powder-soft,

like a fat cayenne shoe dodging pestle round.
I am nearly twenty-five and facing my midlife.

Now my shadow mutters "Father, Father,
Father!" whenever the sun crosses my lips.

Every chest lined in these rows
is worn to bone by rosary

beads. Each heart skips a beat
together and each alike proceeds

in final pump alone. Lord, I offer
you appreciation on a cookie table.

My palms are bare and hanging limp
for you. In my eyes, I burn

a church in fear. In reality, I splash
my face raw in the mirror. You pat

my shoulder and kiss my cheek.
Two men enter my hideaway to empty

themselves. One says, haloed moons enchant
the crown with a flash of golden glory.

The other smirks at me and whispers,
I can tell your time has come today.

Vacuum

When you said the eye is a vortex that sucks
in full worlds like an ocean twirling through a pinhole,
I slammed mine shut like a confronted

mouth filled with secrets. I've glanced at you before
and watched suns Pirouette into suns, exploding,
imploding, making new light. Entire races let appendage

leave torso under suction this corporeal and cruel.
Earth has risen to jig and puzzle-piece under retina
beams so razor sharp. Stomachs sail and knees bend beneath

such expectance. The hairs of my arms have frosted-over
in the loneliness of space time and time again—your polar
stare—I'm barren and desperate and sparking a fire on the hills

of your cheeks. The rill now riding your lips strikes the image of moons
finally settling in air and me, a hole, no bigger than an iris, floating in what's lost.

Portrait of Youngstown as the Archetypal Fallen Kingdom

In this scene, a cemetery, big as three towns, must sit
in the middle of the canvas. A splintered tree
must be nearing its fall, and a boy must walk past it
daily to see if it still stands tall. Only God knows
that its trunk will never snap to kindling shards
for the boy to make his fire with. The boy must be
a skeleton, and ghosts must twinkle in the foreground,
thin as newsprint, a spine balancing on a pelvis.
A building is placed off to the side, just a slip
away from transforming into a scattershot pile.
That is where the boy must rest every bruised night.
And there is me, a black cloud swirling by, looking
down at those of decay, knowing that the smell
of gold had once filled the air, feathering the world.