

Our old preoccupation with time in some way explains the domination of betrayal.

We kept each other company, even in the off-stage illusions of pairing.

The clouds of solitude doomed us into temporary forever, a misunderstanding manipulation, and the contingent inevitability of nostalgia.

Together we waited for the future, still searching through the night for the memories of change and ruin.

The first time it happened our



world shivered. You left a map of what I could not remember.

I must have lost it beyond the unblinking future.

When the light faded and traveled back to the stars, the years showed us the ghosts of tragedies avoided.

This longing for our earlier lives evokes disquieted ideas I long ago abandoned to abstractions.

Behind the sound of rain my unanswered questions fade to word-slivers.

The needles of your gentle absence are emasculating, profane in the diffuse streetlight where your car is not parked. The shadows forget our voices, pretend the silence does not matter anymore. I shut down the night and taste your embraces without you. The empty disappointment exposes the ordinary dissolution denied us.

I skim deepening clouds and tread back through the hole you left behind.

Eden and other poems

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I tell myself again that the world curves down and that my feet are down. I try to remember gravity, to look straight ahead of me, to force the world back up. I turn my head to the side, but keep my eyes straight. Instead of down the world stands on its side. What do my reckless eyes know of up and down? The stars drift rightward, the floor left. My couch pulls me away from constellations and I try not to fall out my window. It takes concentration to remain seated.

I craft ship models out of card-stock and glue. My closets fill with disposable paper ships of every make. There are Dreadnoughts, cruisers, and a submarine or two. There's an Intrepid, a Constellation a Bonhomme Richard, and even the Flying Dutchman. I stage elaborate battles in my dining room, ignoring ship eras—every model capable of modern warfare. I run home movies of waves crashing on ship fo'c'sles I pause and rewind pirate movies to replay nautical battles ad nauseum. Obsession with all things nautical—timepieces and decking sextants and braided line scimitars and sabres. I use Google Earth to

I buy you for a table dance, watch your breasts swing to Europop, smell your sex from inches. Three minutes of gyration for ten dollars a minute, no touching—strictly enforced. Or for twenty bucks, I can have you for up to an hour, if it takes that long. It won't. But that requires more risk, and, really, I can't enjoy it. Besides, I am a married, faithful, naive American. I buy you for three minutes at a time, so I can see myself as benevolent rescuer, not a john. I leave at sunrise, just after four this far north, witness dozens of others like me, slouching shipward, eyes cast down, souls lagging behind in long, early-morning shadows.