

Constant Laval Williams

Anthem

I dance dirge to disco—
out at my city's goth clubs
glitching graves into glimmer
and I'm not sorry. Don't talk to me
about darkness—a cherry blossom
on fire is still a cherry blossom,
a muzzle-flash measured
in millimeters by the wild eye
of a stag, still a kind of illumination.
And glory be, drunkenness—I am sick,
but not broken. Glory to brokenness,
that becoming, I'm not sorry—
the shattered bones of my hand
have healed. Whatever happened
to me as a child, I was still
a beautiful child, and a hornet nest
is still a kind of cathedral. The bottle
taken from a friend's hand as I carry her
to bed, just a relapse into morning.
Your tombstone is still gorgeous
because your name, and your name
spoken aloud is the sound mourning
doves make when startled. Enough.
Don't talk to me about darkness—
this dying beautiful because
I say it is, this living beautiful
because it is—curbside furniture
as high art today, sky as Narcan
for my shadow today. Pink adobe.
A monarch resting on a mandarin.
The trash is shining. The blood
is glistening. A canary inhales
a thimble of air to begin
its tentative song.