

for Eric

In the beginning, we were one blood.
Then the body, stem of thorns, grew
its disagreement from the inside
out. Like all biblical stories, it begins
with a simple thorn, a natural secret
the body kept from itself. I open
the sealed envelope: everything in the sky
folded, gathered into one body. Shoulders,
the tightness of my mouth. Wounded
bird. Lightning fluttering between two boys
who want to be in a basement in a town
they dreamt up. Lightning in cities and towns
I've never been to, never heard of. I am
positive. I am not. I make a moon with sugar
and a damp thumb, watch its unlicked body
dissolve into memory. A couple of towns over
I am born and reborn. I am not. Not positive
until I say it. Until I taste it. Boys died and die
in bodies like this and don't ghost, except
on voice messages their mothers play to keep
alive. They dress to grieve in churches. Inside
black moons. Blotted-out days. Separate from face,
posthumous thorn. Body liquefaction. I dream
about altar boys in ironed seersucker suits
pecking each other like swallows when dared. Boys
with whiskey-mark necks. Like a scream of darts
found them in the sanctuary's locked basement
in the dark. One night, they drew it—the town

they dreamt of, fences yellowed, clouds like the static
on the tv. Their only light. Knowing any other light
would wake one's sleeping sister, her body
in the corner of the room's mouth. Faithful,
moving only as God does. One night
in a symphony of nights. And He likes us
until he doesn't. Like trees struck by lightning,
we aren't visible until we're on fire. Everything
depreciates like this once it's been said. Unless
it is overheard. Unless it is shot in flight.