

There Have Been So Many Summers

Lauren Sparks

I'm hesitant to tell you now
if only because I fear it is all you will remember:
the way it entered the room,
the softness with which it broke the frost,
how it laid against my bed frame on those cold winter evenings.
And oldest friends became buoys against the tide
in a land that had not received
a drop of rain in 64 days.

Underwater in man-made pools, I am often disappointed by the realization that,
at some point,
I must come to head.
At seven, I believed that if I dove to the surface fast enough,
I would catch the world still blue,
palm trees like seaweed against a tidal sky.
Strange how I am no longer underwater
yet still I find myself
propelling up for air.

To explain myself to you
as an ambiguous embassy, perhaps I would start
by saying I grew up here.
But to me that signifies a pasthood, a sense that I grew up
and when I was done growing, I left.
Tell me, are the markings on the doorframe of my childhood bedroom now relics? If
you were to cut apart my spine like a tree,
 Could you count the rings and point out the exact orbit where I became finite?

In my environmental science class, we talked about greenhouse gasses,
the way we pollute the air,
the way we restrict the way we pollute the air, mostly on a state by state basis
where states make their own distinctions on what, exactly, is allowed. And my
professor pointed out that air particles know no state boundaries, do not see
the arbitrary line dividing California from Nevada,
do not wait in line at border patrol.
Yes, the air knows the land by face, not by name, and
similarly, I am not sure, if given a knife, how I would carve the lines.