Cloud Shaped Room

Matt Buchanan

West Virginia University

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Cloud Shaped Room

Matt Buchanan

Thesis submitted to the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences at West Virginia University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing

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Department of English

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ABSTRACT

Cloud Shaped Room

Matt Buchanan

A book-length collection of poems. This manuscript is prefaced by an essay in which the author discusses artistic influences and poetic sensibilities.
Grateful acknowledgements to the editors of the following journals, where some of these poems appeared, sometimes in different versions:

*Bat City Review*: “Impossible Performance Piece #8”
*Cranky*: “Medium at Large”
*Flying Island*: “Kindergartner as Futurist”
*Phoebe*: “Yes, Josher, Things Are Good,” “Scuzzoid Kid in a Tree”
*Smartish Pace*: “Love as a Series of Continuity Errors”
*Versal*: “Skunk Boomerang”
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PREFACE

Tiny beads of rain nestling in cupped green leaves—some larger resembling quicksilver in their substance and movement and shape but then the discovery that they were miniature crystal balls reflecting the sky.

—Joseph Cornell, diary entry July 2, 1946

Collecting and selecting poems for this thesis has been a wonderfully frustrating and satisfying process. And while I don’t intend for this collection to ever be considered as a first book, I feel it’s a necessary step in my development as a poet. Cloud Shaped Room is an attempt to best represent and showcase the work I’ve done over the past three years at West Virginia University. The poems included here show a poet trying a range of approaches and finding different levels of success with this experimentation. By its nature, the MFA experience encourages this type of approach and makes it somewhat of a challenge to create a manuscript that is completely coherent and has a clear “project.” However, struggling to make sense of the work I’ve done and collect it into a thesis has challenged me to better understand my own poetic sensibilities and interests with a larger frame (both literally and metaphorically) in mind, allowing for new insights about myself as a poet and my overall project.

Like Cornell and his tiny beads of rain, I studied the substance, movement and shape of my poems and discovered that they appear to me as miniature rooms (i.e., they are rooms in the
way sonnets are considered boxes, and *stanza* is Italian for room). Taken together these rooms start to change shape and take on the qualities of clouds; they bump into each other, sometimes accumulating, sometimes dispersing, but most importantly, always producing weather. A cloud shaped room is both incredibly easy and incredibly difficult to imagine; it’s very specific but also frustratingly vague. A cloud shaped room is always changing (or interacting with other clouds/rooms and weather) but it’s always somehow contained. It is my hope that the poems, and the manuscript as a whole, create this type of space—both strange and familiar, an interior space filled with weather. This discovery/breakthrough was helped along by the fact that clouds and shapes, often things shaped like other things (“heart-shaped bowl,” “Woody Allen shaped cloud”) are recurring images in my work. But it’s not the presence of the images that’s crucial (though they help); it’s the overall concept and idea that is my project. I’m interested in the impossibility of the world to stay the same—both a consoling and terrifying thought. Perhaps this idea is most clear in poems like “Yes, Josher, Things Are Good” (where the speaker seeks to “immediately invent the experiences [he’s] already had”) and in “Love as a Series of Continuity Errors” (where temporal shifts create inconsistencies in the speaker’s experience of the world). Both of these poems seem to accept the world and its inevitable uncertainty while also struggling with how best to accept and appreciate that inevitability. I’m also interested in the ways in which perception and perspective can never be truly reconciled between two human beings and the
ways in which art attempts to close that gap. This problem is represented in the disturbing and frustrating time a local weatherman has in “Local Weatherman in Experimental Art Gallery.”

So the other part of my project (everyone’s project, really) is to deal with influences and all this seeing through other’s eyes (i.e., always the artist’s demand of see what I see). Some of these poems wear their art on their sleeve while other poems may not announce their influence so loudly. I’m very comfortable showing my influences or nodding to other artists, which may be problematic or troubling for some readers. But I find it’s crucial to my process to seek out art and be in conversation with it. The constellation of influences that inform my work are what allow my work to exist. And making reference to them or writing in conversation with them is a way to be part of a tradition. I think some of these influences are more present in the thesis than others, but a short list would include: Surrealism (both the literary tradition and visual mediums, like Max Ernst’s collages), Futurism, the Fluxists, Joseph Beuys, Bruce Naumann, The New York School poets, James Tate, Dean Young, Matthea Harvey, and Zachary Schomburg.

I do not think, however, that I’m trying to recreate or represent visual art on the page with language. That is, I’m most interested in the approach to representation certain artists and movements engage in and the ways in which their work creates new ways in which to look at the world and understand art’s place in the world. So sometimes, I’m pulling on imagery that may be somehow tonally or conceptually similar to my influences because I’m after a certain
effect/tone/concept and at other times I may just be having a little fun with an artist or movement. For example, “Kindergartner as Futurist” is an homage that also pokes fun at Futurism. The Futurists’ impassioned manifesto and love of speed, technology, cars, and planes somehow seems childish to me. And to write a poem with a very young speaker giving his Futurist manifesto to a kindergarten class was appealing. At other times, I’m borrowing images from artists because they’ve already created certain resonances that I find important. In “Yes, Josher, Things Are Good,” the speaker’s imaginary herd of “hares, and deer, and sheep, and bees” is a list of animals that held meaning for Joseph Beuys. I don’t expect the reader to conjure Beuys when they get to that moment, but the list does seem to have a certain resonance that can be felt even without getting the reference. There are also moments in the thesis that seem to point to Beuys’ sculpture, Duchamp’s urinal, and Surrealist imagery. That is, moments where images are presented as images without any real effort to contextualize them, with the hope that they will gather meaning and resonance for the reader by their stark representation and tonal qualities. A good example of this is in the opening of “A Crowd Gathering as He Sleeps”: “A girl sun-bathing on the roof of a building./A pyramid of snowballs in a desk drawer./A hooded figure at a window suppressing a sneeze./A fireplace that looks like a brain./A chainsaw idling under a bed.” Despite the lack of context/explanation these images are presented in a kind of Cornell-esque assemblage that accumulates meaning and resonance.
The poems that are most influenced by visual/performance art in their structure and language here are the series of Impossible Performance Pieces. The compositions of Lamonte Young and Fluxist event-scores were pieces that were performed by an artist who was given instructions from an other artist that were typed out onto a piece of paper. The most important part of these works was of course the performance; the instructions were merely instructions that told the artist how to perform the work. But I became interested in the ways in which the instructions for these performance pieces worked on their own—I thought they made for great poems where the reader could simply imagine the performance. So to take the idea a little further I decided to write some “impossible” performance pieces. These poems are probably the most heavily influenced poems in the thesis just because I did, in this case, try to mimic the language and style of the event-scores. This is a series I will continue to pursue.

As I stated before, this collection of poems is diverse; there is a pretty significant range of styles, approaches, and forms (always the changing of shapes). But I do think there is a consistent vision. The speakers in these poems, as wildly different as they may seem (a local weatherman, a psychic, a horror film director, a scuzzoid kid in a tree), are all trying to make sense of a strange and beautiful world that’s both consoling and terrifying. These poems seek to find lyricism in plain-speech and resonance in clear imagery. And as a whole, I hope this collection makes for some interesting weather.
for Em
The room is emptier than nothingness…
It is a kind of blank in which one sees.

In my room, the world is beyond my understanding;
But when I walk I see that it consists of three or four hills and a cloud.

—Wallace Stevens
One
Yes, Josher, Things Are Good

Of course I’m nutso-gutso about love. And yes, the sea is a wonderful contraption. All those boats automatically floating to their destinations. I mean, can you imagine if my days at the slaughterhouse were over. And no more nights at the bar. I guess I could do without some scuzzy dude always giving me the hairy eyeball. I could stay home and settle for watching old episodes of *Deal or No Deal*. Not that I’ve ever asked the big questions. So why start now? Just lie back and think of America. I’m nothing more than a background torn from its stage, a pale field where my brother carries our dead dog under a sky of good-looking clouds just staying put. Even on this patio next to the fake lake I can’t help but imagine my imaginary herd: hares, and deer, and sheep, and bees. Always bees. I’m feeling comfortable in this new role in which I seek to immediately invent the experiences I’ve already had. I’m going back inside to bury my hand in a pile of candy hearts in their heart-shaped bowl.
You Know How You Beat the Ghost?

You stop paying attention to it. You threaten to play your homemade theremin. You guesstimate the time it takes to perform open-heart surgery. Then you divide by two. You fall asleep with all your clothes on. You wrangle the Woody Allen shaped cloud into your bedroom. You do the impossible and stay sober on your birthday. Then you wait for your fake beard to grow in. Then you pretend to shave.
Wonderful Disaster

I am thinking of the governor’s comb-over almost every day now. Yet another man willing to arrange leaves over a booby-trapped hole. I am also thinking about the ho-hum way I live my life. At my desk at night, I watch the ceiling fan dream of a life as helicopter. And I can’t help but think, what dream is whirring inside of me. The governor’s on the news again, saying, “I’ll lift your town out of this muck.” A vacuum cleaner wheeled to the river, the extension-cord orange in the grass.
Joseph Beuys Dreams He is Leaving a Message on James Joyce’s Answering Machine

So here I am now. And there you were. Birdsong hustling along! My bloody nose was just photographed for a sculpture in progress. You see, I require the clacking of bones. I’m a roustabout shepherd, crashing in the Crimea, swallowing my art pill, bandaging a knife. No applause please. I left my felt suit in the rain. Your call statics through on the earth telephone—a play without grammar, a landscape obtaining another meaning—the sound influenced by the feeling: geometrical bodies, laundry detergent, oak leaves, & animal fat. But I only hear the work of bees.
Impossible Performance Piece #8

I call my dead brother
on the telephone.

He describes to the audience
what it’s like being dead.

The performance is over
when no one has any more questions.
Love as a Series of Continuity Errors

Your scarf disappeared & reappeared while I talked of the future like it already hadn’t happened. You reached for a fork that was a knife. Somehow the clocks stayed in place & we got to repeat our view from the spinning restaurant atop the hotel. Then my haircut changed & we were touching for the first time in your room. In the window over your shoulder, a different city.
“They’re unloading planes at night, completely unrecognizable, and lurching from their huts with walkie-talkies tangled in their vests of street lights.” The news report was inaccurate, went unchecked, and became part of this book I’m writing. A van leapt the curb and made a drawing on the sidewalk before stopping itself on a car in front of Central Methodist. People came out of the ground to watch the driver stumble out, an eye collapsing and squinting in his head. I heard the sounds while sleeping at my desk, the lonely parakeet that watches over me annoyed by my abuse of folk records. Now, everything has started back again. The neighbor’s in his yard on the telephone, probably asking, did you get that e-mail I sent?
In This House We Love

Let’s bake a cake in the shape
of anatomical heart. Kiss me
on the mouth & we’ll back away from sleep,
shake meaning from the stupid trees.

Fog machine in the bedroom; dry ice
in all the valentines. O false lake filled
with almost-ducks, this world
is made for hallelujahs.
Local Weatherman in Experimental Art Gallery

1

The museum is kept-up but not enough.

2

Even here: the montage of sky refuses to make sense, no matter how sped up.

3

All these distraction-windows! And this space all full of not-wind.

4

This spectacle is so not spectacle.

Empty vitrine, empty vitrine.

5

I’m bored and haphazard and stumbling through.
I’m convinced birds rearranged the clouds while I wasn’t looking—my me-shaped cloud disappeared.

What could I have been doing when the guard said *please, take a step back*?
Little Fluxus Coat Hanging in the Wind

There is sound & no-sound

but never

silence.
Two
Medium at Large

Your palm shows topography

similar to a map of glacial abrasion.

I find nothing but glorious things in front of you:

Look at this shining bowl of fruit!
And this diagram that shows mounds of cash
stacking and stacking up!

I admit I fling my occupation among hills of nothing.

But I ask you to stay. Don’t go blowsy in the thin rain.

Put your hand in my hand again.

I think it’s important you and I start disrobing
lacy myths.

Hold still and a moving van with hiccups

will pass through your brain. Watch as this dissolves in the distant fray.

Now, suburbs of lost clouds hang about.

Repeat after me: Fill my footprints with dragonfly skulls!

Fill my footprints with dragonfly skulls.
My blank mind pushes against a blank world!
My blank mind pushes against a blank world.
Choose Your Baby

There’s a baby with a tattoo of a doorknob on its belly. There’s a baby with a tattoo of a trilobite on its foot. There’s a baby with a tattoo of a wristwatch on its wrist. There’s a baby with a tattoo of the baby with a tattoo of a doorknob on its belly on its back. There’s a baby tattooed from head to toe with the first four chapters of *Moby Dick*. There’s a baby that’s not even a baby. He just looks like a baby. A baby who’s programmed to stumble around your neighborhood affixing UPC codes onto all the trees and dogs and cats and other living things while humming “The Great Gig in the Sky.” Every midnight he’ll play ding-dong ditch. Eventually, a sleepless neighbor with a baby of his own will shoot your baby in the face. This will be much sadder than you could have ever imagined. Your wife will acquire a series of exotic pets to try to fill the void. Your son will lose interest in his action figures and internet porn. Things will never be the same. Just sit in your bathtub and try to fall asleep.
Keith Haring & Me

*after Keith Haring’s May 4th, 1982 journal entry*

(K) I don’t know what I want the world to be.
(M) I don’t know what I want the world to be.

(K) Today I am 24 years old.
(M) Today I am 2 years old.

(K) I’m filled with a certain kind of doubt about my role in the world.
(M) I’m filled with a certain kind of doubt about my role in the world.

(K) It’s been a long time since I’ve written anything down.
(M) I’ve yet to write anything down.

(K) I’m sitting in an airport in Brussels.
(M) I’m in Indiana.

(K) My idea of the world is very simple.
(M) My idea of the world is very simple.

(K) In one year my art has propelled me into a kind of limelight.
(M) In one year my birth has propelled me into a kind of limelight.

(K) I have added many things to the world.
(M) I’ve added very little to the world.

(K) It’s up to me what happens next.
(M) It’s up to me what happens next.
Impossible Performance Piece #11

I wear a suit to bed
& call it *death rehearsal*.

All night: a glacier nearing
the ceiling fan.

When I wake, the audience
just floats away.
I Wasn’t the One Saying Put Up Your Dukes

It was the news anchor rumored to only wear boxer briefs under his complicated news desk.

Still: there weren’t many complaints.

So, honey, keep carrying baskets of our clothes to the laundromat. Pay no attention to the huge masses of cinders, to the torture brigade. They would never like us anyway. We need different make-up and a helicopter where we can just

hover, shut up and eat our ice cream.
The Doctor's Drawn a Mouth on His Surgical Mask

Later: I'm found on the roadside. Somewhere outside Gary, IN. Possibly, Calumet Township.

A bull snake curled at the bottom of a rusted steel barrel. Burning leaves in the distance.

Then: Lots and lots of sleep.

Then, finally: Self-portrait with MD-11s:

Sun rising over the frozen tarmac. Jet fuel and wind tangled in my hair.
Mysterious Couple Scene

We were watching TV, or not watching weight loss pill commercials, waiting for “Best Worst National Anthem Rendition” to come back on. You said something about losing a contact—one not of the eye. There was nothing I could say, not knowing who you were speaking of, and you not being able to reveal any information that I could not discover on my own investigation; which consisted of reading torn in half credit card statements, listening to self-help cassettes while I drove around the city, and finding looked over forgotten photos in the stuck together pages of thrift store photo albums. You were sulking quite efficiently, and the telephone began to ring—a laughter we could both ignore. You said something like, are you going to get that. And I said something like, no, the ways of the world are for me to not find out, and for you to keep these secrets fully out of my grasp. Then there was a look of disgust. The phone stopped in mid-ring.
A Crowd Gathering as He Sleeps

What The Crowd Doesn’t See:

A girl sun-bathing on the roof of a building.
A pyramid of snowballs in a desk drawer.
A hooded figure at a window suppressing a sneeze.
A fireplace that looks like a brain.
A chainsaw idling under a bed.

What He Sees:

Everything they don’t see. And darkness flashing.

The Crowd Begins to Speculate:

He isn’t even asleep.

His teeth are falling out.

No, his hair is falling out.

No, it’s the one where fists are in slow-motion.

No, it’s the one where everyone looks like someone else.

No, he’s lighting a cigar in the emergency room.
The Crowd Becomes Bored and Walks Away:

Let’s watch that cliff apologize to that wave.

The clouds are making eraser marks around the moon.

Look! A billboard of constellations painted to match the sky.

And a barn with radioactive red roof!

He Keeps Sleeping:

Their silence is applause enough.
Girls you look great, but remember
there is a sexual attraction to the beast!
And goose, look more confused—
he might be your father.
Fountain Square Indianapolis, 2004

SCENE 1

(Artist’s studio overlooking the square)

VISITORS
When will the others arrive? Will our pictures be taken? These outfits will not survive on the outside.

ARTIST (talking to himself)
That woman’s boots are ridiculous.
I’ll bet she’d sleep with me. I could smear charcoal all over her breasts.

EASEL
I’m leaning!

COFFEE MUG
I’m yawning.

SCENE 2

(The power goes out)

WOMAN IN RIDICULOUS BOOTS
O! I’ve stumbled on to you.

ARTIST
Perfect. A chance to tell you the history of me. My grandmother spent her years watching for letters to tumble from the slot in the door. My mother wept as the telegraph lines tangled.
And I was born in August 1922, during that minute of interrupted phone service for Mr. Alexander Graham Bell. Now please, take off your boots.

WOMAN
  You look so young!

SCENE 3

(The power comes back on)

STREELIGHTS
  We’ve been dreaming!

PARKED CARS
  Rain! Windshield blurs!

EVERYONE (blinking)
  These drawings of hearts should line the streets.
Scuzzoid Kid in a Tree

Once I believed I could karate-chop the sky out of the sky. But I settled for complicating the clouds with an insistence on shape-shaped things. Earlier today, I yelled You Smoke Weed? at some dude walking along the High St. bridge while leaning out the passenger side of Darrel’s truck, wind all tangled in my Civil War sideburns. Then I was at the nearest strip mall, thinking of getting a self-destructive haircut—but I resisted. I decided to eat some acid and climb this tree. The birds left immediately. Now I’ve got their view. And things aren’t so simple. You know when that masked guy gives away the magician’s secrets on TV? Well. I don’t want to know, but I can’t help but watch. Damnit. I’m into being bamboozled, which seems to be happening less and less now. This world is too full; I told my dad that. I’ve got ten fingers and ten toes but I guess the thumbs are most important. At some point things got serious. Some static cleared. My girlfriend is going to be so cool about my broken arm. She’ll buy colored markers and all the beer. Darrel and the guys will be freaked when they have to drive me to the emergency room. But it’s all worth it. I want to see what happens when I hit the ground. The grass is right there.
Three
Kindergartner as Futurist

My t-shirt has little t-shirts
printed all over it. Airplanes
& stars tumble
over my notebook page.

My alphabet is all tangled &
I like it that way.

I’m tired of the xylophone’s plinking
along to the snare drum.

So I stand in front of the class
and say, I want to cover every field
with concrete;

I want to skin my knees & laugh
at the medicine sting.
Three Birds Do Not Make a Migration

Circling a field, the pilot turned

on his landing lights. Through the glare, two

bird-shaped streaks at 900 ft., then

a pistol-like report as a third struck the fuselage.

The air was moving southwest.

A ground observer saw the whole thing

against the face of the full moon. From every

viewpoint, there was wind.
The furniture rearranged itself
to confuse the room. But who notices
with all this fog in our hearts.
O, happenstance hangover,
marketable pouting lip. The world
is not asking for your signed permission
slip: the payphone is nearly extinct,
the landmine won’t shoot confetti.
So no more prankster, no more
unequal sign. Only serious
now:

I’m on a hill in West Virginia, appreciating
glaciers, which means, I miss Indiana.
Not because of the coins on Whitcomb
Riley’s grave, but because the view
is the best from there. Although, Em and I
joked on the drive home, that we should
have stolen the change and bought Dairy Queen,
or cigarettes to hand out to children.
But, that was weeks ago. The problem
is the now-distance, the not less than
five hour drive to laugh again
in the same room. I know it’s imprecise,
but:

I send back a voicemail of flowers;
the elaborate sky of numbers holds them up to you.
Looking Again

Not long ago, I was standing
in the dark of my backyard, contemplating
the collection of clouds on display
when the neighbor’s screen door screeched
and banged shut. His wife was having a smoke
in a smoke-colored gown. As she exhaled, I thought
big cloud/small cloud. When I looked back
at the sky, I saw a freeze-frame
of tumble-smoke, trapped as I was
on the receiving end of a wave.
Impossible Performance Piece #4

I cut my left hand off with a knife.
There is no blood.

I place my right hand in a paper cutter
& use my stump to press down the blade.

Now both my hands are armless &
on the table in front of me. At this point,

the audience is instructed to wait.
Over the next few days, my left hand
grows back. We all focus on my right stump.
Nothing happens. Eventually, we all give up.
Monday Evening

Mandi is sitting cross-legged on the coffee table when her husband walks into the living room.

She says,

*the day was sunny and was not cloudy.*

Her husband turns to her and says, *the house looks beautiful.*

Everything appears new to him. He is a wise and knowledgeable man. He knows when his world has been fussed with.

He doesn’t ask

about the blanket of Gold Rush mosaic

thrown over the sofa

or the tarmac for letters that tumble from the slot in the door.

No.

He closes his eyes.

Mandi watches as a parachute of particles expands in both their heads.
Emergency Landing Pantoum

I was half asleep & shivering when we landed in a field of gaudy hallelujahs, the stewardists singing so loudly.

When we landed in the field there was no radio contact, only stewardists singing loudly & lots of wind.

There was no radio contact for at least 15 minutes, only lots of complicated wind. So here I am in this no-name city,

bored after fifteen minutes, half asleep & shivering. I’ve renamed this little city the city of gaudy hallelujahs.
What Else Was I Doing?

Keeping the stagefright to myself? Shaving or getting a haircut? Opening with my best joke? Whistling like a construction worker? Sleeping after I’ve had more than enough sleep? Counting the galaxies? Crying to my brother? Smoking the last cigarette? Checking my account balance? Refusing to let the seasons be distinct? Drinking several more drinks? Wondering how long this parade can sustain? Having no fucking idea? Building a series of pyramids in my notebook margins? Dreaming of removing her bone-colored corset? Descending an overly-windowed building? Listening to something very very far away? Staying up way too late? Shaking hands with Civil War skeletons? Carefully documenting the cursive of her hair around the sink? Wishing the test I take has the option of none-of-the-above? And not getting anything right?
Skunk Boomerang

Full wheelbarrow. Side

trees and field. Say *pasture*. Boy

in the backyard. Other worlds.

Say *ampersand*. Shots

fired. All all of a sudden.
The Memory Archaeologist

Recently, while throwing my attention into the darkness of ceiling vent, and listening to an answering machine cassette, my mind stumbled on a document, long lost and forgotten. While the world lived on, I went over the first lines, and was reintroduced to the plastic Halloween pumpkin buckets that were haunting me—which were filled with confusing citations, a file folder labeled “Forgotten,” and a shredded copy of my play, “You Just Woke Up.” Not being startled in the least by this discovery, some old memories were catapulted back into my imagination, and they passed by, strange as our cowboy president’s re-election. I remember reflections in spinning supermarket sunglass displays, laughing while needling my old Ford through West St. traffic, and the absence of sound from the break-room television set. Then I remembered something awful, and halted the remembering, after thinking of two more things: the first being the punch-line to a joke I was told, which involved a mistletoe belt buckle; the second was a town’s only red flashing streetlight that I used to watch from an apartment window. I was being moved by a world that was ignorant of the current world. I was a memory archaeologist trying to fit an ex-lover and raw green pepper I ate at age seven into something meaningful. The room stared back at me.
The Horizon is Out the Window

_for Chris_

1.
I’m terrified of the doctor. He’s drawn a mouth
on his surgical mask. Instruments
twisting in the weird light.

2.
I’m found on the roadside. Somewhere outside Gary, IN.
Possibly, Calumet Township.

A bull snake curled at the bottom
of a rusted steel barrel. Burning
leaves in the distance.

3.
Lots and lots of sleep.

4.

Stupid backyard presentation
of a dandelion bouquet. My laughing
older brother in the background.
5.

The horses framed in the kitchen window disappear.

Mother shopping in every chain store.

6.

Dead dog.
Dead dog.
Dead dog.

7.

Colored glass and Devonian limestone—
the Scottish Rite in blue light.

I’m stumbling through the city.

Beauty burning.
Not beauty burned.

Simply: Being in reality and being a body.

8.

More sleep.
9.

Two greyhounds in an abandoned lot.

Weeds. Graffiti. Shadow of their leashes
connected to me.

10.

My Ford Galaxie descending
the corkscrew of a byzantine parking garage.

11.

Rows and rows of MD-11s.

Sun rising over the frozen tarmac. Jet fuel and wind tangled in my hair.