

Squirrel Country

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Your life takes on a new timbre, the short song with the claps that you put in yourself, the fabric of a blanket that doesn't cover your toes— you sweat and smoke and wear special skin to your birthday party.

You could write your day perfectly. You could press every blade of grass for this. You could diorama everything: your mud under the welcome mat, your breakfast, your head coming loose in the steam of the shower. Your witnessing: the god-light breaking through cracks in the cedar door. And it would still just be you filling up your body.

Oh, but the pushing out exhausts you. The too-short blanket will cover you curled up. Let go of the grass perhaps you do not need to chronicle this. It would be okay for the list to be simple for the list to say just: hummus. It would be okay it would be good even if the song you were humming was one from last summer and not anything you wrote.

The neighbors have a few decades on me. They dance and look out at the rain. Their grandchildren are bright muddy wonders, wandering through their yard country. I still feel small, very much a citizen of where I've been placed.

Touch hovers at my windowsill in the body of a fat squirrel, chatters at me like she wouldn't run if I reached for her. I am coming out of the dream in the courtyard, swimming out from under the ghosts of people's arms. In the waking moment: a ribbon reaching from my ribs to the neighbors and the barefoot music: Colorado is on fire while the rivers storm and swamp their structures at home.

The squirrel has been gorging herself, has been screaming I'm up. I'm up. I've got my sister's eyes in the back of my head. She is saying Okay. Okay. She is seeing everything through cracks in these curtains of rain.

My yard is just touch and scrub—
it belongs to the squirrel, the bulb and bulge of her
cheeks, while my belly is still morning-hungry—
I resent her
yes a little
but that's not why my teeth ache: I want to eat her.