

at your end of life ceremony

I let the glass roll

all the cities

and paintings

and lovers

scattered

what did it all mean

where will you live :

a carbon knife

the beer can

turpentine

when the body clears

it leaves

life's belongings :

papers neon with desire and regret

canvas wet with all the songs unsung

who knew you'd take flight

with red-barns-full

of decades

skins shed

washers and bolts

the bits of life unbuilt

this far and no farther

what silence said

silent in his red pick-up he said

he loved me

the whole length of the beach he said

that the whole length of the sky was ours :

the gulls the seafoam and soft-glass

he said he'd be there

the whole stretch

he said there is no penalty in being a poet

except expect to be misunderstood

they'll look at you funny

for your silence and poverty

they'll look at you with pity

you'll lose your language

and the more you try and perform

the more you parody

shake and shake

the cul-de-sac garage and sudan

everyone will want you to pass

you will never pass

you will never want

live as long as you can here

he said there is poverty in the studio

cans of tuna the cleanest cocaine

friends who live too hard and too brief

red and gold

a retreat to an orange desert

never buying new clothes

a low flying panic

about getting buried by burden

when they burry him they'll say

talent kind quiet

a life lived inward

grey and green stillness

a metallic wisdom

why do you lean me at the edge of realization

i feel the same circle
the same cavity
the same hard steering wheel in my chest
turning clockwise
towards flight
every once in the while I'd come to the surface
to say how awful it is
spinning here
how lonely and loud
before diving back down

one morning I drove close
to the white garden of gone
on a level piece of highway
all my limbs forgot their reactions
and a silver median sprang out at me

through all the green and blue light
I heard a metal scream
the car rolling and then
a heavy moaning tearing sound

everything around me melted

into an absolute scarlet

I slept in the deepest darkness

I had never known before

Bio

Shea Young is a doctoral student in clinical psychology at George Washington University. Shea received a concentration in poetic studies at Smith College. She attended an artist residency at Le Laboratoire de la Création in Paris, France, and completed an ekphrastic series on the collection at the Giacometti Institute. She has been awarded the Mary Augusta Jordan Prize, The Calkins Art Fund Grant, and the Five College Poetry Prize. Her work has been published in Quick Brown Fox, Jabberwocky, Meat for Tea: The Valley Review, Cosmonauts Avenue, and elsewhere.