

The Fly-Over

If you were to ask me where I'm from
I wouldn't tell it straight.
I'd piece together a story
of ellipses, dashes, and bent arrows.
I have never known how to be of a place.

I flew over the Midwest last week.
Land that raised me.
Bright with the lights of Friday night.
Racism ornamental, like lawn jockeys.
Land of wide open earnestness.

I peered from an altitude, wondering
whose river lies there?
whose sprawling, level acreage?
whose water tower? whose subdivision?
My heart – a still muscle behind ribs.

But soon,
A comforting familiarity blossoms.
First in my belly,
Spreading outward to my limbs.
In an instant, I am smitten.

Expanse of my former homeland.
Flatness –
Like the unfolding of a map.
Flatness –
Like the phonetic of the middle “a”.
Squares of variegated green
spreading out from the center
like a meditation.

This is where my feet took root.
I belong to this land.

In a week's time, I am traveling east,
back to the land where I live.
It is night. I am craning my neck
in search of the tides that map my breath.

The lights cease at a curve,

and we are propelled into an expanse of darkness.
My shoulders settle,
And I am home.