

Sonnet for the Queer and Light-Skinned

I am black enough and I always was
the verb in its past tense, not where I am
going but where I have been ashamed cus
of the color of my skin, and no ma'am,
a sister taught me to fix my goddamn
hair, not my mom who put this baseball glove
on my hand. that's how I caught my found fam.
they don't all look like me but they do love
like me. It's a different kind of love,
not forehead chest shoulder shoulder, cross my
heart and hope to die, but hope that our love
will endure not fitting up in the sky.
cus when I die it won't be a bullet
but only the single look before it.

i have seen the end of the universe

A Golden Shovel, after Paul Tran

i can see further than any person. can you imagine the death i
witness from the far side of the universe each day? can you see
the black rays of those dying stars, coming together like crop circles not
yet burned? i hold their last lights in my eyes, reminding me stars,
while not my direct ancestors, are my true family, black as me but
free. maybe that's why they call them afterimages—to keep me from their
kinship. i wonder if, from their point of view, i am a light
or the black they have left me—leave me. i find myself reaching
for someone to know, to show them what i now see: life across
the galaxy. there is dancing and bickering and grieving plus all of the
human things we have here, minus the longing for cause and effect. distance
will not disconnect me from this community. there is a joy in between.
look. the end of the universe is full of life, free from us.

On an early morning flight, I saw a shadow that reached into space

I imagine a space station stationary.

I imagine a scissor half in orbit resembling the cover of *Pig* by sam sax.

I imagine a community thriving in the shade.

I imagine a road without streetlights or tolls.

I imagine us walking to Jupiter and farting.

I imagine my feet hurting already.

I imagine traveling with Zooey Deschanel in *Tin Man*.

I imagine walking to Ursa Major and getting lost in its fur.

I imagine the road leading to Baldur's Gate.

I imagine finding Gale in the stars and finding love and finding home.

I imagine myself Ursa Minor and Columba and Cassiopeia and Orion and Ophiuchus.

I imagine a path chasing light, black and queer and abysmal.

I imagine blocking the sun, freezing or burning, whichever comes first.

I will leave a shadow, invariably small and gay.

I imagine myself a satellite.

I imagine an app to track my rotation.

I imagine being behind a paywall.

I imagine the same magic that took me to the stars bringing me home.

I imagine an airbnb in New Orleans.

I imagine a bbq shrimp po-boy.

I imagine two sousaphones, two tenor saxophones, two trumpets, one trombone, two snares, and one bass drum.

I imagine my family dancing in the street.

I imagine that might as well have been home.

I imagine a long line at security.

I imagine you trying to wake me at our gate.

I imagine you, tired of me imagining.

So I'll stop.

I recognize that couple that just walked by from our flight in.

They pass for hetero but they must be queer.

Only queers wear masks, right?

They're cute. And I want to be friends with them.

I put my mask on and I smile and we take off and I look out the window.

There is a shadow that begins somewhere back behind us and the window won't let me see, but where it should stop, it doesn't.

So why do I feel like I should?

Stop, that is.

I imagine the window dirty and in bed with me.

I imagine you anywhere in it.