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Selections from *Plash & Levitation*

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“Aubade for Sesame Street at 3:27 a.m. Ending with a Line from Snyder”

Synchronized, the Muppet ones
sway peppermint canes
with fishing line visible
below their cardboard stage.
An off-key Frank Oz warbles
how glorious it is to be
a stroke, a streak, a floating
bone, simply perpendicular
to the earth and counted
first, the carnelian match-head
of infinity yet yourself
divided by yourself is still
yourself. The putrescence
of formula puke wafts
from two ruined towels
heaped and sopping in the tub.
There is no other life.

“Centó from the Church of the Nazarene's Advent Marquee “

Our God of limitless supply
behold the star everlasting
who wails in a manger
all the ribbon in the world
no X can replace Him
join our fast honoring
four trucks with Fraser Firs
at the kingdom's gates
during our pancake social
the charity pageant raises
our annex roof's repairs
where Your dove descends
with no limit on poinsettias or
the midnight service wreath
if you can brave the ice

“The Wolfman's Confession to the Salisbury Police Department”

Steam escaping from a chipped tureen
of broccoli cheddar soup is the last thing
I remember. My math teacher date
had just wrinkled her nose at the awful
nearness of a baby grand tinkling
in the vestibule. It was a bad table.
I wish I could say the gray expanse

of cloud that cleared revealed
a saucer moon, that I felt my fur
prickle through my pores and howling
I threw my head back cinematically
as the change came on. But it was steam,
then waking naked in scrubby boxwood
behind marina benches. Some eternity

I spent plucking shards from my palms.
My date's ochre skirt was a kite streamer.
With her bones I made a tidy mound
before shivering like an arctic diver
through traffic. This all flashes back
like glistening hoods of yellow cabs
in rain. Five times I've been shot

by your department—each round
puckers an oozy mouth that closes
without speaking. You're the third
detective who's smoked and smirked
while taping my confession. By dawn
these cuffs will be pink nebulae
around my wrists. By noon

I'll purple my fingertips flossing
marrow from my teeth with your hair.
But in that holy brief amnesia, those seconds
when breezes lick my claws receding,
I'll trace the heart-carved teens' initials
on the chests of dockside oaks where

each name the tide kicks back is wrong.

“Into The Primitive”

A subterranean blue pulses under
our feet as the escalator coasts us
closer to Cretaceous fog and a railing
concertinaed in plastic vines
where a plaid girl leans jabbing
PLAY on an installation that floods
the mezzanine with a pterodactyl's
kamikaze caw. It makes me paw

for father's thumb as our group glides
into the primitive, a rumpled envelope
of permissions in his Carhartt pocket.
Holy shit he says and I say it too,
gawking at a triceratops frozen
in a histrionic snarl that says
I'll gore the shit from your very guts.
It's the coolest thing I've ever seen—

two horns reared at styrofoam asteroids
strung in the purple nothing, ready
to pummel walnut brains to smithereens.
My own walnut brain knows the velvet
rope around these husky flanks
means mucky hands should grub
some other wonder, like the night

I squeezed basement screams that rode
each furnace blast of dragon breath
through the register. I lay on my glowing
Land Before Time sheets until I stripped
to underoos and felt steel slats scald
the bare boy skin of my back, as if
a burn could make their screaming stop
the way summer rain pelts a house
into dreaming morning won't have

the mulberry of a bruise. Beyond is heaven,
the Hall of Extinction where fingers stained

with sidewalk pretzel mustard are free
to smear cases of mammoth tusks,
a plastic quagga with her foal and the last
known living *canis lupus rufus*, stuffed
“since 1930 beside a first edition *Call* “

of the Wild, splayed at page 13: *no
warning, only a leap, a flash, the metallic
clip of teeth*. When the last patron
is a cane's echo fading, our tribe
bellows for the rest of Sister Blaise's
class beneath the beast, flicking
a Nicene Creed paper football

through finger goalposts. Here
I learn four boys gasping
sounds the same as my mother's shudder
when dad swoops me by my belt loops
so I can stroke the stitch
pinning back a saurian's sneer
in the gunmetal leather of its cheek.

