

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Dare Williams: Four Poems

Dare Williams · Wednesday, July 17th, 2019

Atripla

when you found my meds
tucked away in my overnight bag
did you read the label and say
the name to yourself out loud
had you seen me take them
in secret while telling you a joke
or while brushing my teeth
in the other room
what i was thinking while i swallowed
how long i would wait to tell you
did you notice the size
the color like
early morning grey
the inscription of
one two three
like 1-2-3
down the hatch
how i am taking in all my history
and for so many of us
we keep it in because
trauma goes so far back
through the decades
and fear wants to live
in every second of me and i
have been here before with
a secret on my lips that i bury
between gum and teeth
and not even my mother knows
but now this pill is taking over
and my head is spinning
and so i fall into bed
needing to be held but i find i'm
cradling the outside of you instead

*

An Afternoon at Del's

The sterile lighting
at the grocery store makes
my skin itch.

Fat doughy babies
reach desperately for bright
colored prizes,
the green, yellow, red
of the produce—
people in need of
the next big deal.

I see someone
I think I knew once
looking tired
aged by this place
but I have changed
and they might have.

My mother sneaks a pill
buried in
her purse—
white
oblong—
gently puts it in her mouth
wiping away a secret.

Look at the way
time slows
for her.
She walks down the aisles like
syrup spilling
smiles
at the shoppers,
nearly misses
a cart.

I wonder
if that was her first
of the day.
And what kind
of son am I
if I'm not counting.

*

Photograph, my mother at the table

the white feminine filter
gets pressed against her lips
and with each inhale, a loss
life got me started she says
I am five and
maybe I hear yelling
a man's voice
whose filters are tan
I make myself wallpaper
and freeze in the
virginia smoke

*

Travel Poem

Out west
it's your thighs I'm after
multi-colored money
time shifts
and its weight
silhouetted palms swaying
an underground
no wi-fi and many gods.
I take the train
rouged hands
reading language
I do not know.

I've never seen light like this
how it stays with you
sighing
I have here your coat
with a calling card
it must be night and neon
where you are
people different
than us
I hope there's jazz
here—
a storm
stops breathing.

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