

Two Poems

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SEPTEMBER BECOMES THE JET AGE

for Emmett

First the sky is two blues
then twenty-two

a reflexive act of flattery
Chimney and smokestack

become that pixelated neither –
each blue open in equal part

to something and nothing
independent of light's

calculus against touch: fingertip
to glass, deduction mined to mind

Someone says measure (graphite)
Someone says signal (coltan)

We ask for clarity
The signal does not make it

down the line. (Our argument
for expansion has expanded

to include every pixel after or before.)
In good faith we gather to explain

to ourselves what might be happening
to our selves – hands, as they say

before the flame, a collaborative act
like leaves turning after first frost

(Yes, yes: woodsmoke as a given
country's promise *and* failure –

how to tell an ear
from a hole in the ground

a punchline from nostalgia.)
After some debate

upon this we can agree:
'The missing plane idles even now

at the edge of a salt flat
What feels comfortable is just

pre-occupation. What sounds
promising, placeholder. In the capitol

you can tell a patriot from a priest
by the size of the riot, but not

vice versa. Someone asks if we
know more than this. She asks

come morning will there be
a twenty-third or -fourth blue

At first we mistake her voice
for a factory, then for a fact

Someone else's voice breaks
into song: "September in New England

let loose the cats and the dogs
we're drivin' home —"

You are always on one side of a country
when I am on another

AESTHETICS OF AN INCOMING ROCKET (or, THE HISTORY OF RUSSIAN CINEMA)

after Tarkovsky

fodder through
fodder through the gates

to where the gates go where
a slap on the back likens habit to luck

the birds reply chorus-like
“it is too early for beauty”

the hexagon proves ownership
nothing else

whereas the pentagon
aesthetic of the recent open world:

it is time to let go
time (fodder through the open gates)

to fold her through
the iron gates

by force of
a slap on the back makes fodder

luck look
fodder in a bus

fodder in busses
fodder in a train

(folder: “in the trains”)
fodder across the plains

the asymmetry is just
for aesthetics told her

(fodder with beautiful legs)
(proves you are stronger than the enemy)

bird fodder heard fodder
herd fold her told her

another day of sacrifice

another what proves we give

back the bull his entrails
what was twenty

minutes ago a bull
fits together in black and white

(from bread to dough
from dough to batter)

we dress the bull in his skin
the bull comes back to life

folded head to toe
back to flour sacks

back on the wagon
against the executioner's block until

the knife pulls away
fodder taking back

the stab the slice
the bleed and so on

and on so
it goes to the stockyards

to the mind the rye returns
train's reversal

away from whence
it came fodder to

that dream that herd that
heard we fodder

for (or against)
everything we have

