

ADAM CLAY

A Hymn for Shuffling

What we expect of edges
or what we pretend

the borders would be without
the middles, the medians—

You pour a glass of something
and fill the house with

more silence, and then more silence,
and then less belonging,
an infinite portion of patience

even the walls desire

and each tree in the winter
continues its climb

like a paragraph in the past,
the snow wearing out the sky.

In the news, the shell of a bus,
its insides blown out and up

into nothing. Years ago
remember when the light bulbs

were supposed to stop working?
The trees managed our turning

towards them with such devotion.
Most moments

I realize
exist as hymns to another time, one

forgotten, others unforgotten
like a single bird floating

in the wind, unmoving
the sky around it.

In the Keweenaw
the snow will continue to fall

for months and in its falling
there will come along a new season

but in the seasons
the smoke along the sky

is its own type of turning.
Horses still in the cold,

the sky in Kentucky blue
to the point of becoming

a type of border, a year typed
out simply and surely and inside

our perspective, all endings
crave their demise, a key

meant to be lost, a door
no one would think to open.

Exhibit A

Would it be enough to suggest
the smoke from across the river

suggests a type of life or a type of living?
I'd like to be stranger than I've been.

One bite taken from an apple and left
in the yard for an animal

to scavenge. Could this be a day
or any day? I'd like to think so.

I'd like to think there's something
to be said for an immediacy or closeness

to death, as if nearly leaving this world
can color our existence in a particular way

or another. *I miss you*, we might say
to ourselves in those moments,

but those moments lumber ahead
without us where another person

is making copies, sipping the last bit of coffee
of the morning for a day going,

a day already half-gone. *I miss you*,
we might say to each other in those moments,

as if repetition can be a way
or even a minor attempt at remembering.