

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.