

finding summer a new home

I'm so afraid for you to read anything I create,

Mamaw, because I know it'll be hard to understand
now that too many things expand like soggy July nights,
memories fogging you up with the heat thunder shaking away

your name. Snow caps the blue ridges of your eyes, keeping
smoky secrets between the days. Fewer are
the mornings when the clouds part so carefully,
a dawn rising in the iris of your song. Burning

bright green, like the morning glories growing up
the side of that old house, surrounded by a cove of
trees. Long gone are the nights you stayed lit well
beyond dusk, like a lantern hanging off the front porch,

swaying to your honeyed hum and the creak of the worn
wood rocker you always watched us from.

We grew between the honeysuckle solstices, where we
built twig castles and made muddy witch's brew and

wove grassy shrines to the fireflies that giggled and
guided us through your fields. A willow-o-wisp of summer
caught in the breeze. Our youth couldn't see past their tail lights
shining so bright, but there laid the truth:

The magic of those nights didn't whisper in on the wind,
it came from you.

I used to think your love moved mountains, but the older

I get, the more I see you—and the more I see how the mountains

sung so sweetly as they moved right through you.

You have carved yourself into so many canyons for us to travel
so safely, but we're nothing but a potlucked dynasty, so I know

there will come a sun that won't be able to set

with you calling to tell me a story that you can't remember

forgetting, but by your God I promise I won't let any of it slip
from the valleys of my chest again—because death doesn't take bargains
and he won't take bribes, but he sure as hell will take

all this regret I've got pent up inside. So when that final dusk comes

to settle up with your foothills and all my divides,

I will think of those molasses nights, when I'd hear your voice

ringing through the chatter of June bug advice,

my heart will be full of my love and your praise, as I let

you call me home

to the end of my days.