

The Lost Boys: A Requiem

Ricky who moved away when I was three

Jamie killed in a hit and run, aged 10

Wayne—fell from a project window, age 14

Keith—fell off a bridge at 17 (or was he pushed?)

Tee-Tee, Bam-Bam, Walter, Little Man

Shot in a drive-by over money by

Black Charles and Jeep

Shot by Tee's cousin the following week

Jackie took him-

self out with a gun

Butch who introduced me to my lover

dead of AIDS, his lover

Jayson waited a whole month

to follow

William lost to AIDS

Essex lost to AIDS

Joseph lost to AIDS

Tony lost to AIDS

Melvin whom I loved

but never met

Kenny, fiercest young boy on the block—

Everyone called him “faggot” from age 10

Andre behind bars

Michael behind bars

Emmett behind bars

Lennie behind bars

David and his stunning white fur coat

disappeared after his mother’s funeral

Stevie who saw “Police Line—Do Not Cross”

could not resist

Baby Johnny, christened, dead in 30 days

Tony on crack

Big K on crack

Patrick on crack

Willie on crack

The Iron Man across the street

did PCP

Keyshawn inhaled fire from freebase while

brother Kevin did the White Girl

and brother Kelvin took the Boy

Frankie swimming in a bottle, MD 20/20

Jerome in Johnny Walker Red

Ernest in a 40

Tommy in whatever he can get

Joe, not dead, only resting

Nathan, not lost, just not here

Troy, not gone just—

Richie—just not here

Cuerpo de hombre

The waiter's ass sways like a cypress
in the breeze as he carries lunch trays
up a flight of stairs. Reed slim and dark

rich loam from the Carolinas, he's not
my type anymore: I've outgrown
young men like that, filled out to appreciate
thickness, density, weight: men with legs

like tree trunks, ripe apple full biceps
a temptation waiting to be eaten,
chests like grassy savannahs, wild plains
overrun with slightly graying hair.

But sometimes a breeze from my youth comes up

envelops me with the scent of discarded skin,
the men I've left behind, hypnotizes with
a sway and gentle shake, leaves my mouth
watering, tongue babbling like a sylvan brook.

Dream of My Cousin's Wedding

We walk down the aisle together, he and I,
holding hands, shaking with held-in giggles:
too serious at thirteen, I am the man atop
the wedding cake come alive with blown-out
Afro and clip-on tie beside a cloud of gauze
and lace, my cousin, billowing, veil hiding
the thin hairs of his first mustache.

No one is surprised. All seem comfortable with
our mocking, pray this Tom Thumb dress-up
and pretend will purge us of the thing they fear,
both of us too quiet, different, strange—they have
suspicions, other names lying in wait to hang
on our thin shoulders if we do not reform, repent,
“grow out of it.”

High on Communion wine transformed
into grape juice, we race to fly out of this
church, those clothes, that small town,
into cities, adulthood, our true names.
Seal our vows of escape with a stolen kiss.