

ode to girlhood [& paris]

years ago you climbed to the sacred
heart & tumbled down the incline
on the funicular. come closer, said
the woman at the birthday party, i can't
hear you. listen to the patter of your
nana's memories, a childhood in the
sands of alexandria, the dumbstruck pulse
of cellular destruction edging closer
with every breath. try & name the satin
effigies burning out across the city, topography
of unattainable jellyfish hearts, the
void a swift relegation of skin & earth
& invisible from every angle. you think about
touch. nebulous femininity, transient &
unreliable. girlhood as a ruptured vessel of pink
splayed out across the sky. girlhood as
midnight jasmine in my moon's kitchen.
womanhood as scraggle-toothed
vegetables in the fruit bowl, falling into ripe and
bursting pears with mottled brown
shells. womanhood as syntax consisting
of borrowed lip stains and sapphic
smoke rings. you consider femininity to be
the quiet fossil of your body in the
aqueduct in june, the delicacy of your
spine under seven cotton layers in november. only
this, your month, leaks forever into your
heart. you are the unclaimed sheets at the
laundromat, fur of a dead bee on a light-soaked
windowsill, salt in the pans on the plains of a
homeland, tea stain on the linen covering your nana's
table, exoskeleton of august's last
cicada,
pink,
like your brain.