

PAUL GUEST

Plenitude

That boy in the snowy late light
midnight T.V. gives the skin, blue then
dark then blue, is me. With my mind
shaped like a finger, I point
him out. This is before he will point
a borrowed bike downhill
and touch me in return. This, too, is before
rushing home in rain, through
woods, stopping in a clearing of clouds
and canopy to note moon
like milk on my skin, in the water white
and pebbled, for the first time
in my life. I called it home, the apartment
we would love in after class
and there she waited while I drowned
in my clothes, in that light
bouncing earthward from the sun a world
away. This is before I fell.
This is before I swallowed back
a new species of emotion
I'd never known to live within
my chest, before I said
not a word to her that suggested I might
go away and go unmissed.
This is before I fled. This is before
I hung in the elevator's throat
and waited for the world
to catch back up, for the world to spit back

lost time. This is before
we lost my brother to the vacuum of his blood,
the blown veins leading
back to his heart. This is before
I loved three times. This is before
I feared all day to lose
the last, my heart pulsing like a lead cloud.
This is before. Curled
and in a clot, before long he'll sleep.
He'll rehearse another
life. All night long I wait and I watch.
One by one I write down
what he dreams.