Owl Question

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LUCK

Beneath the suburbs is a place to be late and wrong. Plain and unlucky, I have visited many times. Some days I feel a sinking towards that land of blunders and my shirt turns to polyester, my laugh goes so sharp it breaks bones. The first time was a Halloween I spent with a distant cousin. He is always in that under place: so drab even mosquitoes overlook him. We spent the night beside a silent phone, dressed as eggs, our hands folded like bad cards. Once you’ve been under, something shifts; you always go back. In recent years I have gone there to miss trains, read maps backwards, pay the rent twice and starve. Sometimes I’m moving down a perfectly flat sidewalk and falling. Once you’ve been, the other losers are obvious: you see them knocking over glass figurines, describing oral sex to the man who cleans their teeth. They invite ten to dinner and find themselves chewing alone. In a crowd the unlucky throw the lucky off balance, everyone’s feet begin to squeak. When I was small I loved a girl who gathered light by breathing; her mouth was warm as sleep. Sitting close, I would glow from looking at her, borrow shine like a moon. My mother once explained: we can’t all be beautiful; even a gaunt field feels the cold kiss of morning.