

YOU CAN'T GO BACK TO SLEEP

that year it was like everyone i knew fell out of a tree, hurt
themselves recklessly for show, a display of wringing limbs,
self-conscious origami of appendages that seemed suddenly new
and necessary, as if we'd just received these parts, just learned
that there were unknown things they might do, other possible uses suddenly possible
plausible, and i follow you on your bike through the path you choose—twisting
dirt alleys and ditch bridges, i sensed the weight of them then—arms and legs held
together by the stringy heat of sinews and muscle, straining, straining to hold a course
to follow you to the field behind the baseball diamond, the heat there a vacuum
and let you insist that this was actually my idea, the way we hide
our bikes in a shallow gully, sneaking through trash and weeds, taller, more sure
than us, until we come to a spot where the grass is pushed flat by other bodies, other kids
come to smoke pot and drink stolen beers
we are alone here, and you might motion then
that we lay down, maybe me on top of you, our faces not touching, not kissing, not looking
at each other, slipping hands underneath clothes, into them
placing our mouths on places other than mouths, our movements a mimic of something
we can only guess at, until after several minutes, slick, uneasy, you say stop
ok, you say, ok. there is a wave passing over us, a wind
of smothering, a thick breeze, we dress and shake this off, don't
speak, move back to our bicycles, our action figures, our endless streets, sidewalks
driveways, and vague ideas—the heats and stirrings, the hint of what we want
and wonder if everywhere in that warmth everyone else is waking
fumbling in bedrooms and bathtubs, at sleepovers and in tents, backyards,
and under blankets, fingers moving moving and moving
while the streets spread out, heat hazy and limitless, bodies become
slowly aware of themselves, uncalibrated instruments, the wheezes
and honks they produce, the uncontrolled bellows, the cacophony
a not so secret language—the clamor of singing parts—
of hips, hands and curious palms, shoulders, thighs
and suddenly upturned flesh, a chorus of hungry noises
that will soon resemble a tune, a summer song
we will eventually recognize as our own

-Cole T. Rachel