

Free Articles

The Washington Post says: 990, 498, 258, 172.

The Washington Post says: deadly weapon, toy weapon. No sorry, plastic gun.

The Washington Post says: attack in progress; undetermined other.

The Washington Post says: this month, last and the next.

The Washington Post says: the cold weather, or else what you don't know, may kill you.

The Washington Post says: they were all children once.

The Washington Post says: 19, 55, 22, 11.

The Washington Post says: they went in need of nothing. Or else they went in need of all—
mercy or medication, bread or love, sun or work shoes.

The Washington Post says: they had hopes for their children when school began that fall.

The Washington Post says: they had finally found someone to love who also loved them.

The Washington Post says: the bodies are mostly, almost, already in the ground.

The Washington Post says: we were not there, you know. We didn't see it.

We didn't hear the popping, didn't see the panic, rising orange. Didn't see their eyes.

Didn't see fear become despair as they realized it would happen.

Didn't know it was as good as done. Already too late for a Wednesday.

The Washington Post says: in our suffering, we are all one people.

(One people, all of us entitled to buy guns.)

The Washington Post says: no one will be spared.

The Washington Post says: you must not be a raven.

Or else perhaps you are already one and we have misunderstood.

The Washington Post reports you, high browed, dark-winged flier.

You carry a thin leafed branch away from us, flung far like a memory, like words we know but cannot think of, seen but unreached, a low cloud that flutters, waving in hope from the distant, blue beyond.

To All the Good Men and Women I Will Never Know

Goodbye to you,

men and women of my imagination.

Goodbye to the people who sleep alongside you in your beds.

Goodbye to the thick Texas heat,

to the Carolina summer.

These climates like a stranger

laid fast over the roads and churches

and all those places hold.

Did you know you'd be leaving when you lay in your bed,

the stars spread like homemade jelly

in clumps above you,

sweetening the sky?

Surprising, the stars, with their sudden bursts of silver

coming all this way to greet you

from their sky-bound, all-knowing past.

It is not hours or weeks

or days or months

but right now

that you are valiant.

You, like my father,

who lay awake all evening,

or maybe who like me

talk to light that's already expired.

The memory of your red wagon in the yard,

the smell of rain in puddled footsteps,

air fresh on your tongue even this morning,

droplets you can almost feel.

In memory, everything is stilled and held inside a single moment,

which at the same time expands to contain everything there is to know.

There is the blanket scent and evening breeze,

and they make you think maybe you can do alchemy with the recollections,

distill the good ones down to starlight

as though anyone knew how.

The Gyre

Slow Talk City is a place where
everybody talks
so slow.
Everybody is
so busy
slow talking,
nobody notices
the breeze rustling,
the cows lowing,
the leaves tilting their red heads,
the weighted branches,
considering the drop.
Nobody notices,
the air cooling,
the bread rising,
the white-haired beast slithering
slinking,
inching,
sticky trailed and inevitable
so slow going,

they won't even notice,
says the beast to itself,
they won't even realize what's happened
by the time the new, cruel winter,
our eventual end,
crawls up on its Eastern throne.