

Kneeler

The bench. I remember it
by stained cushions only & the smell
of knees. This wood is solid
and present. An encasement.
When it was my turn, I pushed my finger
along the railing, thinking dead tree,
thinking how I usually forget
the times I'm this close to Stillness.
Sometimes I watch them get up,
still talking. Arguing with my mother
as she tried to convince him down
to a lawn chair. I could still see the red
after the man had lived, rust in our picnic chair,
his skin washed off the pavement
with a firehose. The porous ground saturated,
an indelible shine. In London
I saw his feet, pulled up
from the subway. I thought they were claws,
blackened and hoofed down the middle.
They pointed up to the sky
and didn't move & there was no urgency
except for the stall of traffic. Still,
we were all on our way somewhere.
I had the notion of underground lightning
and descended afraid to breathe in the dead electric current.
It smelled like nothing & I went silently
the whole way.