

PURPLE CHAIR

Sun almost spilling from a clump of mediocre clouds—
those birds, that train know what they're doing today.
Just two sips left in my coffee mug, morning
beginning to cohere. The pulse of last night's cicadas quit
right when I clicked off the lamp; now, the subtle buzz
from appliances keeps this house from silence.
The backyard bamboo spring-green, my gray hoodie
matching the sky—Niedecker cautioned to Corman:
might run into weather. Sudden sun brightening
this page, I squint to see the shadow my pencil makes.
The beige blanket I've thrown over my feet
starting to warm: I will not sit, here, in this chair, forever.
Then a flash of the trash collector's truck passing by.

SEAMS

On break in the classroom where you teach, you eat Wheat Thins,
wash them down with V8. My phone tells me
autumn in St. Paul is forgiving: the tree-lined river

idles past both kinds of ghosts we believe in. Leaves
pasted to the sidewalk, burned edges the only evidence
of seams. The poet I'm reading whispers about a lover's hair

in a book whose flowers are too specific to be named
here, where the river is full, where one dark snake divides it.

THE PARK'S NEARLY EMPTY THIS FIRST WEEK OF SPRING

Have I mentioned the crow slowly approaching,
the one making harsh sounds into the air
like a crow who knows what he wants
will only come to him by complaining?
You might say I have some time on my hands.
You might say this crow could be a kind of symbol.
Bless you—that I will have to consider.
That I should think about for a while.

ADVICE AFTER THE DIVORCE

Damp silence following a late-spring rainstorm.
Fireflies' green staccato above the darkened lawn.
My small daughter, unwilling to admit she's tired, asks
if we can catch one, wonders what we will do with it
if we can. We live in the same imperfect world, she
and I, this perfect world like the evening beneath
wrinkled sheets, this world in which we both understand
we are to die, like the firefly, like the grass, and *That's OK*,
she tells me, *Daddy—that's OK*. It's supposed to rain
again tomorrow. Maybe it won't. Overturned
on the table, the empty jar between us, its held air
swollen with what could have been our words.

THE DINER

I'm at the counter, studying my plastic menu.
The older gentleman beside me has been taking plenty of his time
to cut from a sausage patty the precise, exquisite triangle
he just forked into his mouth. The delicacy of the praying mantis
comes to mind, and he looks my way as though about to say
something profound. I lower my menu. I am open
when his gaze returns to his plate, where a thick slice
of buttered toast lies soaked in yolk. Clearly, this
is important work he's been doing, quiet and intense
and alone. Like one of those statues made to look ancient,
surrounded by plants at the hotel pool.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Hello, my name is cloudy, but I am telling my own story
because, really, who else could tell it? Wonderful—
now that you are here, I would like to begin, but first
I must ensure that you are comfortable: would you care
for a cup of tea? Perhaps a lightweight sweater? Maybe
a last-minute run to the restroom? Don't worry,
I will still be here, because my story needs to be told.
At this point, I assume you never left, or I assume
you have returned, and I assume you are ready—more ready
than you ever remember feeling—to hear a story.
I was born when people talked about the weather.
Then I died when people talked about the weather.

TREY MOODY

Trey Moody was born in San Antonio, Texas. His first book, *Thought That Nature* (Sarabande Books, 2014), won the Kathryn A. Morton Prize in Poetry, and his more recent poems have appeared in *The Atlantic*, *The Believer*, and *New England Review*. He teaches at Creighton University and lives with his daughter in Omaha, Nebraska.