

Anton Cabalza

rate of dissolution

It is 7:46 PM and the moon is the soft light
on a dynamite fuse, a pocket galaxy whispering of
wonders to come. I am still in this world,
a shopping mall bench held together by bolts while
around me people are ocean currents.
Everything is fine. I feel my bones set like bulkheads
between muscle and flesh, my buoyant lungs
a reminder that some of Earth's air is mine. And I am
waiting because it is

now half an hour late and the ice
in my drink is beginning to melt. The
playlist is on its second or third repeat but
it's okay, it's a good song, it's okay.
Above, the stars have turned into the dots
on question marks:

Where are you?

what happened?

why am i

pacing back and forth, like these six floor tiles
are islands in a rising sea, and the sand is
starting to cloud the shallows. my throat
is a breakwater, foaming with the chatter of
those around me

where are you

twelve feet from two different kinds of
fried chicken. nine meters from the bar where
someone is singing a song that someone else can
hear, seven hundred eighty seven inches from a
speeding car one ten billionth of a light year
from the bottom of the pacific except
i am no longer there. i am

a man, brought in by the waves of a late night
song. watch him trace our steps like a river
trying to talk its way back into the ocean.
see, he has found the highway, and the bridge above it
in passing cars he sees

his hand, 2 o'clock on the wheel of a sedan, his
left shoulder hiding in a rearview mirror, his
name scattered across license plates,
carried by the rain.

there are no people, only faces, the night sky
miscible like ink in the water of their eyes

can you find him? it's like that children's game. don't
rush, the neon signs are always on. is he:

behind this mannequin?

in front of this car?

inside this fountain?

here? still here?

relax. it's just a bit of blood being pulled with the tides. from above,
the continents have folded in like a doctor's note god puts in his pocket,
chestnut flesh and concrete gray and chemical cyan all a watercolor pool
in a person's veins. it is dawn, it is twilight, it is high noon on the summer
solstice because all the stars melted when you swam in the sky.