

# spacecraftprojects

we are all astronauts

transmissions  
vince guerra

## Love Poem

Held a battery in my mouth.  
Held all my kid-hurt.

I knew I was white trash then. I knew  
all twenty-two miles from town, the free-for-all

of blackberries swallowing the Toyota. Sure,  
everyone's just a person. But will I be

seen as I am? A blue tarp covering  
whatever, years ago, needed cover. To be that boy again

face down on the bed, blear and soothe and then  
evening in the windows. I know that feeling, too.

To feel—what right do I have to feel?—  
or just say, *thinking of you*—

## SUMMER WITH AUTOIMMUNE DISEASE

It wasn't like St. Louis, where the nights were unbearably hot, so you'd go for a walk, and the shadows under your feet were cicadas, and the electric beat of their tymbals pulsed you like the chest-shaking bass of a passing car. And the sidewalks streamed with teenagers in heat. And, one night, a cop sitting in his car was shot in the face. Through the windows of Blueberry Hill, buzzed couples shared pitchers over darts, and just off the main drag, streetlights made Greek statues of the sycamores and their mottled trunks. All the tables were set out in the streets, and every table was taken. By the high-rise on Westgate, five elderly women sat in folding chairs and took in the faint music. And you could feel your loneliness blossom like some rare, unnamed thing in the heat and the dark. You could be taken in. You could say, fuck it, and get in a crowded car more crowded by the radio, driven by your second-drunkest friend—whoever was up for it. Fuck it. You would be taken in. You would make out with everyone you possibly can. A friend of a friend, that friend, a woman you were just introduced to who draws pictures of plants for the botanical gardens in South Grand and looks like Isabella Rossellini. Fuck it, be grand. Be as grand as you can. You're twenty-four. The waitress at the Waffle Palace is smoking a cigarette, and you've just ordered the tamales, for god sakes. And the girl sitting next to you, who must have invented tight jeans, will give you a lift, if you like. And why not? Even at twenty-four, you're dumb enough to just go along with whatever. Have another house margarita. If you whisper what you really want, in that moment it shall be. Want to take off your clothes in a dark field? Want to take off your clothes in a dark car? Let someone drive you home halfway through the party. And if you're looking for love, you're doing it wrong. But the summer's just begun. And all the cars on Delmar are honking their horns for Obama. And everyone, no matter what neighborhood they're from, just wants the summer to go on forever. This is something you remember. When you were alone and sick and couldn't walk. And the heat of your body was unbearable. You weren't even twenty-nine, but you were ninety, watching garbage TV all night until you fell asleep. And while you watched, you thought of that summer in St. Louis and lying in the grass at Forest Park as it got dark, and someone had a guitar, and someone was singing, and then you were singing.

## EMERGENCY BROADCAST SUTRA

In Wichita, a crow means nothing good  
is playing at the movies. A chirp is just

a smoke alarm dying. Ancient omen of  
something something. You spoke a sorta parakeet.

You commandeered the TV screen. Kept me  
unquiet. Waving your hands in the street

in a tropical vest. Stuffing my head with static.  
We drove drunk in a borrowed car through some

dream version of St. Louis. Was I the driver? Were you  
the tail lights gone blurry like firefly jam?

Somewhere in California, someone's sister  
finally got sober. And I was some animal in search of water.

I was such an unbelievable coward. A broken radio  
to God. So you tuned up your little car alarm cover band.

That's how you spoke if you spoke at all. Bird call. Faint signal  
in the salt and pepper. The horizontal, the vertical,

blah blah blah. You were the insistent flash  
of the check engine light. The urge, the undertow of a hundred

wanton thoughts. Call it a crash, not an accident. Call it  
what it was. The drift of someone giving up. And my life

become bent metal. My life, her life. When I ignored  
your cordials, you sent a car wreck. You sent letters from Fiji,

postmarked my amygdala. There was no gauge  
on me. No decoder ring. But you traced me lonely

like a Richter. Hindsight is easy. Babble's easy. But what fool  
knows Morse code? I had no mood stone. No emergency

stop. Just surge, just onslaught. Dot dot dot.  
Dash dash dash. Dot dot dot.