The steam line of his flight path
makes a bitter seam
in an otherwise clear sky. Now
see two skies, a left sky
and right sky, an easy sky
and the sky of effervescent clouds.
But the sky will never
be ours again: now there is
an inside
and outside,
a place to be living in
and a place to be pushed out of,
a dying place, a sabotaged wasteland
of dirty needles, doorway junkies
cracked flat with the horizon of smoking blood,
and the hospitals, where no one
is brave enough to clean
the small red spill in the busy hallway,
not even the patient who,
from his bed, smacked dumb
with a morphine glove,
feels delicately a sense of flying,
a rising up. It becomes the dream
of escape, where the ceiling tiles
crack down the center and he floats
in his wrinkled white gown
toward the broken sky, which once he tore open.
like a shirt,
like something
    just getting in the way
of something more desperate.
Vapor Boys

There’s nothing I can do now. I have their faces, tattoos burned with bursts of light on my open eyes. What I see, I see for good:

stacks of bodies
that, like any good pioneer, I could have mapped—

now there’s nothing.
If a mother here has a dry eye, you know it’s only because she’s boiling inside the way some fever took her son in its misty vapor and was gone without a whistle.

If there’s a lover with no arms, you know it’s because he’s forgiven them, those useless tools with their articulate fidget at the ends.

Every day the world sucks down more sun and packs it away. Nights, then, are about radiation: this warmth hissing back toward the blinding noise that gave it up

and for us, it means that slowly, one of us who dies
will enter the rest of us as a breath
or a bright light
or a photograph of a gorgeous young man
who smiles with a fire
where his teeth should be.