

#60

for Susan O'Malley

Raquel Gutiérrez

Radical optimism will kill you

A woman versed in color theory
doubles over and never gets up
Generative tensions, healthy skepticisms
placed on temporary leave

Everyone softens
when stillborn ideas are involved
Everyone stiffens
when the sudden wave of agreement overtakes;

striking Thomas dumb and his naysaying
disciples don't know what to do with themselves.
Suddenly community congeals; a collective
clotting. A tourniquet too late.

I want to tell you a story
about not belonging as a sign
of resistance; we should opt to be turtles
and sing to one another. Decency.

Move along with zoning codes leave us grieving,
morphing in favor of children, irrepressible in their pursuits,
adding crucifixes like punctuation. Stay positive
in the face of dwindling credit, somehow.

When I smile my ancestors stir. My aunt died
worshipping a blue-eyed Christ even as the Salvadoran
landslide overpowers our sense of duty to improve
our lot on this side of the border where we say

Good-bye.

Good-bye.