

THE FUTURE

1

A bird in the airport
hopping among our feet—

dun puffed chest,
a sparrow, I think—

collecting bits of popcorn
beside the luggage

while invisible speakers
fill the air with names

of cities irrelevant
to the air outside—

from which this bird
has become mysteriously

separated. What should
be done for her?—

little feathered heart,
little Dickinson, maybe—

who won't let any of us
touch her. The light

is mostly outdoor light;
the high ceilings'

support beams
make the environment

not unsuitable. If only
she could be coaxed

down the jetway
and onto the plane

to take to the sky
inside our human

endeavor, wouldn't that
be a kind of release?

2

After we boarded
and settled into our seats,

after the lights dimmed
and the movie began,

the plane shifted
course imperceptibly—

suddenly disconnected
from the narrow bit of earth

we expected to receive us.
When we landed

we were together
in that daze of arrival—

carried reflexively
by the moving sidewalk,

the sky train—until
I was already well

inside the city I must
assume was arriving

suddenly into each of us.
All around me:

palm trees, saguaros,
floating puffs of clouds—

and it became clear
we were in, of all places,

Phoenix.

THE REENACTMENT

When the dog ran out onto the field

between the opposed lines
of uniformed men
a few squat cannons
muskets cantilevered into the air

a boy chased it
from among the colony of lawn chairs
t-shirts and gym shoes

that in that context represented
a more fully comprehending vantage

and for a moment the battle continued
muskets popping men shouting
period curses and commands

while the boy and his dog
filled the smoke-hazed pitch with their chase
leash trailing in the grass
the boy calling *Buster Buster*

until the guns slowed then stopped
and a few soldiers broke from their sides
to chase the dog too

and one of them trapped the leash
beneath his boot so the animal
jerked to a halt

and then the dog and child were led
triumphantly from the battlefield

toward the bright colors of the future
where we all now
were standing to receive them

THE SUICIDES

Who drew themselves

through the loops of themselves
to come out the other side

into nothing. Rows of knots
on the table,

tight as seeds.
There is no way

to untie them.
Nevertheless,

after supper,
gray breeze through the window,

I will try once again
to loosen this one

with the tine of my fork.