

Dark Matter

I feel guilty about so many things.
I'm a paper bag
of the bad stomach feeling, cut
like a Chinese lantern. A red one
with a tiny fire inside.
The flames blinking yellow
and shadow across the dirt path,
like your sleepy eyelids, browning
my cheeks, curling your arm, wrapped
in my arm.

You could crisp that paper,
make it curl around us,

as we lie on green blades
and watch stars tumble to Earth,
like a bag of glowing marbles, rolling outward--
into the lanterns' distant blush. The orange
embers still visible in the darkness,
burning out-- one by one, until there is nothing
above us, or, here on the ground,
except the curve of my hips
towards yours, like the curvature of spacetime.
You say *we're waiting for our organs to fail*
and they will fail. Dim, blink-out,
curl under all that dark matter.

Curling tubes and needles, curling
out of your paper skin. Not regular needles,
but the kind that have barrels. Thick ones
you can look down and see hearts and kidneys
lined up like a row of rotting pearls.
The flickering of your cells' light, a neon
sign giving way to night. Your eyes dim,
as if you've crept through our house,
unscrewed each bulb and curled your limbs
into a blackened orb,

blackened by the crayolas you colored my dress
and the big book I'll pen you in,
with the Nothing.
Big.
Pop-up.

Nothing. Also called dark matter.

In a graveyard in Somewhere, Suburbia,
one paper doll, lies on moist soil and curls
next to a headstone haloed by cool moonlight,
where she peers through the barrel of a periscope,
up at the dusty cosmos colliding overhead,
aware the bursting globules of gas
will soon burn out

like the eyes of the paper-heart lantern,
licking up all my bad feeling.