

LIT

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Noah Blaustein

Poem with Nothing in Common with My Father's
Painting *Ciao Baby* Except His Lemur & His Light

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Here, the gold in this light lines my eyelids
& weighs them down so I can't trust
what I think I see. Shadows elongate
with a slowness & pain, like listening
to Todd, my neighbor, play bagpipes, & I
want to sing let go of your heart, let go
of your head, but this bronze light is a net
lined with shadows & lets go of nothing.
If David Dekernian drove up in his yellow
Impala, still sixteen, no marks from where
the steering wheel collapsed his lungs
"Got time for a surf?" I'd grab my board. Not
even the neighbor's kids coming home
from junior lifeguards with their zinc oxide
smeared out from their noses like war paint
cheers me up. I watch Julie, their mother,
run from room to room hiding cigarettes
& the brown package from the catalogue
for enlightened lovers & know
these kids know too much.
This light hides nothing.
A bone where we buried Obie, my childhood dog,
pokes out of the grass. Last week this light
followed me into that rotating bar
where my boss took me to say
"How 'bout some time off." The mai tai umbrellas
formed a small village on the table
& as the bar rotated past the gargoyles
on top of the Mobil building the light
made them look like they were weeping & so

I began to weep & the soot streamed
from the gargoyles' eyes down their cheeks.
I tried to explain to my boss that in this specific light,
the gold lines my eyelids & makes them
heavy & the things I've been telling myself
I'd deal with when I have time, D.K.'s
death ten years ago, the crescent moon
mole growing & darkening on my collar
bone, catch up with me & everywhere
this net of light holds some evidence
of them,—half moon shadow from the ash tray—
staring back at me. I told my boss this light
makes me feel like I'm standing
on a bucket outside my neighbor's window
as a police helicopter catches me in its
spotlight. I said I feel as if I'm a lemur,
those half dollar nocturnal eyes caught
in daylight. What I'd give for cloud cover.
I blink & this gold light carries my father
& now a friend in the east with a tumor
growing on his brain, into my eyes.
This light seeps into my eyes & burns
like my neighbor's kid's eyes burned today
for the first time, full of chlorine.
What I'd give for a salve.

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