

Skipping Boulders

At picnic tables, his cousins converse
Juice box strewn and dismembered food
Late November, Thanksgiving gathering

Below the campsite, a riverbank invites
Broken boulders and overgrown
My son waits for me, beside the water

Hanging beside his hip, he fiddles
A bone dry stone between his fingers
His planted stance, a bit unbalanced

The rock in his hand, he attempts to throw
Into the creek, liquid glass sheet
I withhold critique on his expertise

The stone in my hand is much bolder
It is coarser and less circular
But I know mine will skip farther

I have tossed these rocks before
They glide against the surface
Caress the water, then pierce below

My son teeters with uncertainty
He is unsure of my technique
Yet still, he watches intently

I forget what it was like to be
Unsteady to this boulder sea
Beneath my knees, unbroken and free

Ice Cream Truck

Four wheeled music box
Rolling down my street
I get out my socks
Put shoes on my feet
I reach for the door
Walk into the heat

Can't wait anymore
I'm eager to pay
For cold treats galore
On this summer day
The vendor has stopped
Outside my driveway

Down my steps I hopped
To the ice cream truck
What if my scoop dropped?
Might I test my luck?
Should I get in line?
Spend my only buck?

I figure it's fine
The prices are low
So I choose to dine
I greet the window
To see what's for sale
My eyes start to glow

Soft serve by the pail
Cake and sugar cones
A holy frozen grail
I would break my bones
Just to make a bid
Ease these stomach groans

Not sure what I did
But it made him shout
"We're out, alright kid!"

High School Performs Hadestown

Violet flash, violent crash
Of drums and cello-strums

Yellow hues, trombone blues
Stage set to silhouette

Green dress, a Greek goddess
Hades' wife, Lady Life

Black dress, rose-petal pinned
Mic stand and violin

White spotlight, strung by wire
Persephone and choir

King Alastair

King Alastair was a greedy man

In his bedroom, treasure boxes laid
Under gilded quilts and pillows tucked
Of pheasants' fur and bearskin covers

He possessed all, but never for long
King Alastair was a careless man

His drawbridge gates he forgets to raise
So robbers pay him visits and raid
By nightfall, to infest his fortress

He sits in bed, wearing sunken bags
King Alastair was a drowsy man

Crown on forehead and across his face
Blinded by silver and oily hair
Drifts into dreams, is all but aware

He lays there limp, breath still in motion
King Alastair was a sleeping man

Footsteps echo in his empty skull
Deaf to the noises made in the hall
Burglars who whisper outside his door

He senses dread, but just in his head
King Alastair was a mental man

Two stone lions stood against the wall
His very own granite companions
In gravel voices, these statues spoke

"He rests for now, but soon he will stir"
"King Alastair is a waking man"

His eyes unfold and look to the floor
Crawling with thieves who broke down his door
Cloaked in rags, wielding knives in their hands

He grabs his robe, then gets to his feet
King Alastair is a frightened man

They raise their torches, flames of amber
Unsheathe their swords and approach his bed
He bleeds and bleeds while his sheets turn red

King Alastair is a dying man

Puzzle Box

Atop a glass top coffee table.
An unopenable wooden box.
An otherwise decorative piece.
As opposed to those more practical.

Varnished with care, lacquer like concrete.
Layered colors, like peacock feathers.
Its surface patterned with rhombuses.
Multi-colored, mahogany cube.

Its edges shimmer like chandeliers.
Cut with exquisite geometry.
Engraved with vivid iridescence.
It awaits your frivolous struggle.

Locked from the inside, from every side.
Lusting for your primal exertion.
Irresistible invitation.
Knocking against the walls of your mind.

Indulge in this puzzling distraction.
Ravenously pleading for your time.
Always begging for your sanity.
You know you want to see what's inside.

Evidently, your house guests have tried.
Blood stained corners allude to failure.
Wasted attempts only lead to more.
Humans' insatiable persistence.

Constantly clawing for an answer.
Planted, ingrained—it's in our nature.
But this box can't ever be broken.
There's no solution—at least not here.