

Collateral Light

poems by

Julia Cohen

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Collateral Light
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FIRST EDITION

My thanks to the editors who have included the following poems in their journals:

<i>1913</i>	“Not the Fact of the Burning Forest but the Scent of the Burning”
<i>Colorado Review</i>	“Collateral Light”
<i>Dusie</i>	“Call Me a Grown-Up but My Five Eyes Blink at Once”
<i>Esque</i>	“Is It Hard to Count the Times I Am Deliberate?” “The Place We Worry About”
<i>Everyday Genius</i>	“Bird, Bring Me That Finger”
<i>Ghost Town</i>	“Someday You Will Be So Long” “Sad Paint” “Invention of the Outside World”
<i>Harp & Altar</i>	“I Carry a Basket for the Fingers That Fall”
<i>Hawai'i Review</i>	“Romantic Weather”
<i>jubilat</i>	“We Clamor We Like the Sound of It”
<i>Lamination Colony</i>	“You’ve Handed Me Something That Will Never Dry”
<i>New American Writing</i>	“No One Told Me I Was the Arrow” “The Room Deformed the Sound of It”
<i>Notostrums</i>	“Fill Me with Poison!” “I Have a White Napkin Strapped to My Head”
<i>Octopus</i>	“For the H in Ghost”
<i>OH NO</i>	“We’re Enamored with Shadows” “They Hover They Do Whatever”
<i>Sixth Finch</i>	“The Decoy Museum Is Still”
<i>So & So</i>	“A Bright Wire Flown” “What Was Record”
<i>Spoke Too Soon</i>	“Practice by Fire & Doubt”

THE DECOY MUSEUM IS STILL

The decoy museum is still a real museum
so distracting you can die inside & not
 even know it

Your whatness your childhood-bird looks
so young snow like gunpowder

Cough syrup on the collar of a white shirt
 something to hide under the bed for

I reach back into the body of your memory
& stick Post-it notes on the edge
 of every mirror

**

Cold grass on the floor & covered in sugar
the slurred satellite of your swing set

I fashioned the raincoat to keep rain

on your inside an apple tree sprouts in the blue
 Oldsmobile's brown cushion

**

The decoy museum lit by bayonets fresh
from the oven

cut with colleagues & the weaker version of lies

returns to the situation of a leaf
 brown paper & a misspent life

You walk into a stranger's dirty pocket of air

**

More than a replica a lure
the birthdays range in anticipation they fell for glory

Trouble distinguishing grids: a farm or a way
to fire a person

Fake flowers burst forth from fake seeds
nothing ornamental in the decoy museum

In a guild-like fashion they lay it down
in a sound-like sound I take it away

Those bandages dirty pompoms need changing
I let one emotion follow the other & believe
them both

**

Wing clipping season ends when I cut
the swans from your ankles newspaper shin guards
are birthdays

Between the gilded pages I whistle the grass
between my thumbs
I destroy the like-like decoy I've been meaning to
live

Place all possible coverings away from your face's reach
what happens to your face?

A MEMBER OF THE LIVING CLASS

I ate a cucumber covered in dirt
An owl caught in a triangle

Do you consider yourself vertical?
Over your face a magazine at dawn

**

Some say I'm hurling towards earth
earplugs blissed out on a pumpkin

Sleep snatched the war so what quickens?
Clang clang?

Raise your antennae arms
Your children busting

with adjectives, anti-statuarities
& a hanging bird

**

Are you reading in the street?
Between tires dice-teeth spark
like dolls aflame like a battle pulled back

Some say I'm close to docking in skirt or
shorts or a patch of paper

A handful of red-headed leaves
I'm bustling to show you

**

I admit my dog carries
a baby monkey on his back
A clan of clean socks the war casts off

Can you direct traffic?
Choose your fiancé?
Here are the replacement parts
tin pants

**

I'm islanding up

Some say I have little
faith in the full
sentence

Yet each hair
an arrow, a holograph
of teeth

A yurt for your sweetheart
Yogurt pailed & passed
around the wars

The bird submerged in a magazine

Some say they browsed
the first acorn

WHAT WAS RECORD

I miss bees in winter

Tuft, a treetop pushing
against the ceiling

Some say nothing
can mount the sky

A magnet under the ice
pulls the skater
toward me

I'm filled
with invisible arrows
& ice & ice

No buzz
Skinned to miss

A box is
human, a human
nest

The restness I compass
I forgive
the nuisance war?

Some say skin—
having done it