

After Your Lecture on Class

**That was me warming up,
sleeping laundro-mat dryers
winter in Macon, shinnying
along streets, stealing fake meat
to feed strays just like me,
skid row at fourteen, it's true.**

**Was me labeled siewash
nearby grandpa's place, blanched
kids clambered out from water
to avoid my sully.**

**In deeper waters, fishing net,
jumping mullet, clamming,
oystering, gigging flounder,
for a living, Outer Banks breaks.**

**Was me in the fields, picker,
then cropper, yes, sharecropper,
tobacco, sweet potatoes, happy then
for roof tin on tarpaper shack.**

**Was me running skill saws,
swinging sledgehammers,
thrumming in sixteen-pennys,
finishing, too.**

**Me, packin' crackers, running
thread, looping leaves to sticks.**

**Cleaning rooms, private homes,
serving counters, tables, golfers
gentry, general public, yes,
server turf.**

**Was my brother robbing
banks, my mama in asylum,
me on the road, thumb extended.**

**Yes, they still redirect my entryway
in the hotel we both meet to speak.**

Oh Beautiful

**Oh beautiful
child taken at ten
beaten, tortured,
malnourished
whose mother, father
tore into, pummeled
for coming out,
for coming out.
Oh beautiful boy,
made to eat cat feces,
vomit, pepper-sprayed
in your face, made
to live in a cabinet, box,
bound, gagged, at eight
because you might be gay.
Oh beautiful, beautiful
beautiful, beautiful
Anthony, Gabriel
Oh beautiful, beautiful
beautiful, beautiful boys
I bid you peace to keep.**