

*Don't call us dirty*

The speaker loves their mother from a distance  
although, anxious at the prospect  
of having no-one to dedicate this poem to  
misdiagnoses several of her cohabiting morbidities  
and tries to solve everything with lesbianism

Circle the same green city where everything is imbued  
with the scent of decay            everybody dating each other  
crying about time, unable to make sense of emotional liberalism  
though this doesn't stop lovers from telling her  
*you're too much    you hurt me, but I got over it*

*that's white-adjacent queerness*, she shrugs  
shotgun gay wedding through life    the universe    everything  
her racial constitution in some stranger's mouth a precursor  
to netflix and fucking

she attracts detritus with her longing for something other  
than the armageddon of malignant havingfeelings  
spends eons distilling an essential truth  
from the platitudes of terminal desire i.e.  
*you're unlovable    too heavy*  
*never as new as the other girl*

& those were the halcyon days of thievingthievingtheiving  
living in anyone else's ugly histories, as in  
*baby, i love you, i can't do this tonight*  
*i was thinking about her so much i couldn't get wet*

following her cartographic impulse, maps human relations  
with generous humour  
tells every butch            *you can be my father*  
every femme                *i can be your mother*  
anyone in-between        *we could be together forever*  
genuflecting to the subject of her idolatry  
and throwing that all away with *you don't care about me enough*

though if she ever made light of nights wasted in allyship with ugly haircuts  
it wasn't difficult to forget that her own genealogy was a hierarchical one  
its holy triptych the sun    a marred childhood    the state  
beating down on bodies looking to eschew the cargo  
of an oath to feeling unfree

tells lovers *do not save me*  
self-sufficiency a drug running through the veins of chronic loneliness  
holding tight to the mantle of her blamelessness  
anyone's arms corrugated bars through which the sky

cast shadows over the origins of her affliction

in worship of the catastrophe of love on lockdown

lawlessly, this desire to be dirtied        where living ran the body unclean

commands daily a plea        to god in the machination of every fresh heartbreak:

*I permit myself to pray at this temple*

*I permit myself to take refuse in it*