

Recommendation By Marissa McNamara

Reject the reports, the scans, the needles,
the hospital windows sealed against flight,
and cold tile floors, clear fluid emptying into your chest,
pills lined and ready on the counter. Go.

Find Buddy Guy's breaking strings and solos,
pieces of Janice's heart, bourbon and beer tabs. Go--
meet at the crossroads. Eat yucca in Ibor City,
catfish po'boys in the French Quarter.

Buy dusty records in dim stores that sell pipes
and batik blankets. Reject the fluorescent lights and cell counts
and go. Lose yourself in piles of red leaves, thousands of them,
in yellowed pages and Polaroids, echoes and early morning mist,
blue, wave-softened glass. Drop dimes into the passed basket. Carry
a pen. Leave your number on the wall in a bakery, on a bus in Bali,
on the cobblestone streets of Rhodes. Watch just now the hawk.

Watch him push off from your gate and glide and go
because fighting the body will turn you to salt,
to small razor lines springing blood. Go
because you cannot hold a child, a note, a feather,
you cannot stand in the bleachers, pack snow
in your hands, hear cicadas hum or watch an eclipse

when you are trying not to die. Go before you climb
into the machines, the sterile offices, before you let the gap
in the back of your robe keep you here. Go before
they put you on a gurney and abandon you
in a hallway, next in line for slicing.

3600 seconds per hour can tick by here in these halls
or float by like a river barge hauling coal in the sun. Go.

Watch the water from the banks, watch the dark cover the day,
watch the sky explode into chrysanthemums and smoke and sparks.

Go for a walk and disappear into New York, Mumbai, Catalonia.

Drink gallons of dark beer, take auto-rickshaws through the streets,
see salt mines, catacombs, saints' fingers beneath glass, days with no nights,
cava caves. Fold your limbs into prop planes that shudder in the wind.

Watch your skin sun-darken, the guards change, walk the Galapagos,
Jasna Gora, watch the Fatima pilgrimage women on their knees. Go.

Do not die here, host for insomnia, scars, for Ambien,

Vicodin, Cysplatin. Do not die here with hair clumps caught
between your fingers. Do not die dragging an oxygen tank

behind you. Go before you are a number on a file.

Take your name where its syllables roll off of tongues,

as if you are in their mouths,

as if you taste of everything.