

# Phoenix

## Dog Slaughter Beach

From the corner of Third and Washington  
You can't see where your brother went  
Out somewhere past the beat cops  
And beautiful women who work for the government  
They walk by in air-conditioned tunnels  
That arc high above the street  
While I sweat in my hot coffee  
And daydream about how we might meet

Your mother asked for a picture  
She says today is your birthday  
In some strung out western stutter  
Making all the world her ashtray  
She adjusts her aviators  
With an absent shaking hand  
Tilts the camera forty-five degrees  
And calls out modeling commands

When we used to go to parties  
You'd spend an hour before the mirror  
And I'd drink your gin  
And ask about your high school souvenirs  
Tacked on the wall above the bed  
An old inkjet collage  
But you were never much for talking  
So I knelt to your mirage

We'd walk the three blocks westbound  
In the moonlit Philly fall  
And the party would be grand  
All our friends would grin with pride  
All our friends would be so drunk  
And have such pleasant things to say  
And at last, we'd see each other  
In the way that we had dreamed to be seen

Those nights, your house kept secrets  
We'd stumble up the stairs  
My hands tore through your records  
While your hands unpinned your hair  
The both of us still green enough  
To remove the other's clothes  
A quiet signal of devotion  
That I am happy to have known