

## South Somewhere Else

Nana Grizol

It was assumed that the South was a thing that took place  
Somewhere else  
We grew up in a town that our parents just found  
On a job search and liked it quite well  
Who had so many friends who arrived just like them  
So their kids were our kin for a spell  
It was assumed that the South was a thing that took place  
Somewhere else  
Like the feeling of home was a book on a loan  
From a college town private school shelf  
We took in every chapter with interest and laughter  
But never quite a sense of ourselves

A dangerous narrative, haunting imperative  
Led us little kids to believe  
That the place we were from shed a sheen we should shun  
Like the salt of the sweat dripping down from our sleeves

Was assumed that the South was a thing that took place  
Somewhere else  
Like the sun that went down on the edge of my town  
Progressed no further west as it fell  
And on visits to relatives, couldn't quite tell  
'Cause his pounding heart sank as they swelled  
It was assumed that the South was a thing that took place  
Somewhere else  
As if Jim Crow geographies didn't haunt all of the  
Streetscapes we'd come to know well  
Not just the old neoclassical mansions we passed  
Or the high school had stories to tell

I mean the segregate sound of that old college town  
Rings so loud to me now, I must say  
As we worked all-white restaurants, trash-talking debutantes  
Our nascent class conscience, obnoxious displays

Was assumed that the South was a thing that took place  
Somewhere else  
And maybe it was, which I say just because  
We weren't noticing where power was held  
Captivated, the capitol's capitacratical  
White liberal logics prevailed  
It was assumed that the South was a thing that took place  
Somewhere else  
Multiracial resistance to greedful ambitions  
Cast out in revisionist spells  
Power concedes 'bout as much as it leads  
As we started to see for ourselves

It was assumed that the South was a thing that took place  
In a retrograde rendering of absolute space  
As though everything left in the world wasn't traced  
By production, subjection, resistance, escape  
Seen squarely through this disidentified gaze  
And through textbooks and TVs, our modernist ways  
Could never quite focus, our participating  
Renewing, rejecting, affirming, negating