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Notes for if I Fade Away

Brownout '03

This is to remind you that I loved you
way back. You, with your sleepless
rivers & strings of power lines -- titans
gathered into formations of tender
flesh & luminous pleasures. You
are always moving. Longing, we say,
because desire is full of endless distances.
An apartment building. Two boys, different
shades of brown. Sun above, acting
as father. Prayer as two fists arcing -- brown
boy with good hair choked by the parentheses
of his shoulders -- broken horse. Please don't
mistake these notes for elegies. These are the breaks

the summer where I learned of hunger & the absence
of pain. Bridgewater, that slagheap
hooptee moored in our oak-ridden suburbs. Glimmers
of future lives. Sashabaw, Dixie
Maybee. Loose change for 75 cent coney. The big homies
pushing bags behind the skatepark -- all the white
paint peeling off the divider wall. The chain-link
fence we tore back between our cracked pavement
& the fairway. The brownout that melted five
days — how I dipped my feather-light body
in the tub to keep cool. The water

searching me like so many soft lights. The general
mind was hollow back then & I did as I do now
sketched your patterns into the margins
of my ribs. This was before *Meet me*
at the corner wash or *your turn to go*
to the Marathon became slang for the lies
we believed. Before the 3AM streetlights
the palms crowded with earth-tones. Before I learned
logic & before we should've read Hamlet: Lord,
we know who we are yet we know not what
we may be. Where I learned to be in the middle
of bright islands & dimebags. Those whisper-filled trees
the pavement begging to kiss my knees.

