Straight shot to St. Louis. Made up downtown that runs up to me sweet and I see, unthinkable, the summertime girls in purple school dresses, their unbraided hair, plateau village I left six years ago now. It was the flooding sun, I think, that reminded me. There, I was their stranger. Here, I fake belong with the summertime people of you, St. Louis, your ice cream coffee shop, your feet on the outside iron crossed tables. Mine too, sweet cream of noon on my skin.

When I apologized to Carl for the wine stained book he said by way of forgiveness, of excuse—*it’s of the world*. The rest is a dark cement city. We got Helen from the Mega Bus station after midnight under a sky that was industrially plum. The light made everything gray and electric. Even the graffiti alive from the stone embankment, on the pretty wood of a left factory. The letters became spirits in paint like how ghosts found faces in the masks Musa made of ancestors. Wouldn’t stop the pest of his fever, heat stroke every time he slept. St. Louis, I thought of your voice that way, burned out to make its shape, its ebony wood, its calling back. St. Louis. The light dark like a plum. Another scared heaven we are driving through.