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The Ferris Wheel

We all take turns on the broken Ferris wheel,
hoping beyond hope the cables do not give,
the structure retains its integrity, every screw
and spigot oiled and tightened, at the ready.
Steady now, it tips towards the sun,
its many teeth swinging along in silhouette
against the empty sky. It whines. It rattles on its hinges.
A red, white and blue axis of rims and spokes,
a hydraulic web designed by a man-child
who liked to draw circles and lines.
And people. Between steel soldered to steel,
best friends, newlyweds, fathers and sons
sit with their hearts racing, their thighs braced
against the evening chill, shoulder to shoulder,
arm in arm, dipping and rising into the night,
hoping beyond hope that they touch ground
eventually, that the thrill of being thrust towards heaven
does not end with a snapped wire, a rusty bolt or nail,
human error or bad luck. So they laugh because
they're drunk on love, because gravity tickles the
diaphragm,
because others are laughing and somebody is screaming,
and because that's what humans do when they're scared.

A Girl Stands on Debris in Homs, Syria

They shave the child's head every summer,
but her hair grows back quickly
in dark brown wisps.

She has her father's sadness in her eyes,
as if he is looking through saying,
Life is hell, my little angel. Now go play in it.

She is learning to walk through rubble;
learning the art of balance and decision,
trusting broken things to hold her.

When the world is grey ash, stone
and debris, bright things stand out:
A yellow toy dump truck good as new.

Lilac was always her favorite color,
so we dressed her like a new flower
and gave her sturdy shoes.

*Put on this watch, my child.
It will make these days go faster.
Let it hold you by the wrist when I cannot.*