Sleepless

Mariana Mcdonald

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/thenorthmeridianreview

Recommended Citation
DOI: 10.7825/2769-5115.1050
Retrieved from: https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/thenorthmeridianreview/vol2/iss1/14

This Prose is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Butler University. It has been accepted for inclusion in The North Meridian Review by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Butler University. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@butler.edu.
Mariana Mcdonald is a poet, writer, scientist, and activist. Her work has appeared in numerous publications, including poetry in Crab Orchard Review, Lunch Ticket, and the New Verse News; fiction in So to Speak and Cobalt; and creative nonfiction in Longridge Review and HerStry. She co-authored, with Margaret Randall, Dominga Rescues the Flag (Two Wings Press, 2019) about Black Puerto Rican heroine Dominga de la Cruz. Mcdonald lives in Atlanta.

Sleepless

Hypnagogia:

Not a place,
or ancient myth,

but endless miles
of highway
the mind travels
on the road
to sleep.

The scenery
is neon clouds,
fluorescent fields,
and glowing
craters.

The jaunt was
now and then
before all this.
In coronatimes,
it’s nightly.

Sometimes
I’m almost there,
at my yearned-for
destination
—blissful oblivion—

when a thought
zips by
like a pebble
on the windshield,
and I swerve awake,

suddenly
in a traffic jam
where nothing
moves,
the hours pass,

and I’m stalled
in hypnogogia
again.
Against Reopening

_Brookhaven, Georgia. May 2020_

Brookhaven is the city I had thought of,

small but bustling, vibrant,
young and on the way to great
adventures. Just the size

of that day’s virus deaths
across the country, in the
thousands—fifty-three,

a number quite unsettling.
I argued that the virus is still
raging. Look, as many people dead

as all of your own city,
can’t you see the danger?
People want to open up. I get it.

But I’ll refrain from outings
for my safety, all our safety.
That was two weeks back.

Today, the numbers at John’s Creek,
nearly ninety thousand people gone.
Soon it will be Macon’s hundred-fifty.

How I fear the terrible road to Atlanta!
It makes me think  
It makes me think  
of AIDS.  
The blundering, the slowness.  
Denials and neglect and  
ravaged bodies. Toxo in the  
brain and purple lesions. Morgues  
heaped with Black corpses.  
It seems like that  
yet different.  
Omnipresent in the  
stars and skies.  
It makes me think  
we have to rise  
again, angry, fearless,  
to make a better history,  
to leave  
better memories  
for the earth.