

***Title Vision Overload***

What happens after a vision overloads?  
 Does it spurt toward the rafters, snagged  
 in dust,  
 gold leaf flaking below, where a throat gapes?

Does it rob you of one eye,  
 keep the other to watch you smaller?

Does it crusade the mirrored halls,  
 cold and luminous, answering?

Does it flare in your nerves,  
 spill from hands cupped  
 overflow the room,  
 archive the turn of your head?

Does it demand the eye left offered  
 offered to a wick —  
 flame studying the curve,  
 wax remembering the socket?

Does the world insist on detail,  
 edges harden, contours declare,  
 distance returns, armed?

Or does it break into a screen,  
 kneel back, lit with voltage,  
 dust in the gall, gold under the tongue —

leaving only residue of looking,  
 a body thinned into witness?

**Commented [JJ1]:** Consider clarifying this phrase slightly. It's an incredibly strong idea! "Watch you smaller" reads a bit grammatically loose. If this is intentional, disregard this comment.

**Commented [JJ2]:** Love the texture of this.

**Commented [JJ3]:** There is a slight disruption here in syntax that's disabling this stanza from a seamless movement.

"spill from hands cupped / overflow the room" lacks some hinge. Perhaps it's worth smoothing so the accumulation reads more fluidly.

**Commented [JJ4]:** Do you mean the "left" eye or that the eye is gone? As in, it left? Clarifying this could change the trajectory of my edit.

**Commented [CJ5]:** Right now, the poem has a lot of incredibly strong stanzas. I know you requested more substantive feedback for this work. I am wondering if the sequence of could build more progressively? For example, moving more clearly from bodily experience/rupture (as you do with the 5<sup>th</sup> stanza), to sensory distortion, to spiritual or technological transformation, so the ending feels more fully earned?

In short, I wonder if the stanzas could build more cumulatively so the poem feels like it is escalating, not just circling variations.

*Title De Janeiro*

The beautiful is always blue—sky  
 -high, bizarre  
 I eclipse as a tamborim  
 while the void keeps tip-tapping envy ~~on me~~

In Rio de Janeiro, the stereo drums;  
 sandals slap-slap drive in its streets.  
~~Duo~~ Road signs duet, hands clap—clap—per minute

Lemon-shine blares ~~through~~ a school of windows,  
 cracked light bouncing—funking roof—~~tops~~,  
tops dancing flaws snap, snap an audience for show

Rhythmic intervals, long pauses,  
 reflections mixed—his pale skin hisses,  
 her leather skin sings, higher, higher.

Flawed-song picks up—boom-boom, tsk-tsh—  
 trumpeting horns beep-beep in traffic,  
 cleaving to get their turn in the final chorus.

The day is too bright to bear;  
 I hear a note tic-tickle in Locrian scale  
 from a beach ball hit,  
 spraying sand over the bridge, nearly covering me.

A whiff of beaten guava,  
 Sirens erupt wail-splash, planes of light

I run—feet clatter, clap-clap on tellurian lane,  
 grief leaps in skip-skittering,  
 catching me on this beautiful summer's day.

**Commented [JJ6]:** I think it'd be interesting to drop the "top" in "rooftop" to the next line for flow.

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**Commented [JJ7]:** I feel that this line could be removed, unless you can streamline the image to better fit the rest of the stanza.

**Commented [JJ8]:** This poem builds such a vivid sonic and textural field that the ending, in comparison, lands a little too plainly. The final line isn't bad at all! But, because the poem has spent so much time creating this charged, musical atmosphere, ending on a more straightforward—almost simplistic—statement can feel like it gives up some of that momentum instead of transforming it.

I'd develop the last line—perhaps, even the last stanza as a whole to ensure consistency in your thematic choices and style.

Line editing wise, I've implemented some interesting and experimental stylistic edits (enjambment mostly)—that I think plays around with your wording great. This enjambment feels intentionally playful and stylistically effective, especially in places like "sky / -high" and "roof— / tops." I'd just watch a few nearby phrases where the syntax becomes harder to follow, so the visual and sonic experimentation still reads clearly.

***Title We Mean to Stay***  
*for Africville Seaview Baptist Church*

We wanted to leave for someplace with community. Nova Scotia's rural where woodsmoke sufficed. I told you: *keep your curls, wear that ancient yellow jewelry*, at the crossroads of Red and Assiniboine. *Add colour to the flowers, to the houses. Brightness could anchor us.*

We stay.  
 North of Halifax, buoyed to the outskirts, South shore of the Basin.  
 Open and closed as lines dry our laundry. Our youth wanders the dirt path, smartly-dressed

You're not alone in not knowing. The city demolished us before our parents could visit. Residents have fought for justice ever since. There were stores, a school, a post office, but mostly, a spiritual sea view with its own set of lungs collecting salt.

Steps worn soft by Sunday shoes, voices rising ~~en~~-like heat from blackened soil.  
 Then the city spoke through a burning letter about relocation. Opened and closed.  
 November swallowed the steeple; homes fell one by one.

The shore was paid in a child-sized sum before they bulldozed a grave for its viscera.  
 A woman gave a eulogy in her carriage, crying all the way to anywhere.  
 Those who stayed had no option of dignity rerouted into paper-work.

This land abandoned its natives; trees folded their green and left soil gone unwashed,  
 railroads dismantled, the sea ending in fairytale heartache, borders raw as open wounds,  
 -an irrevocable display. Remember when playtime ended? Communal circles sunk into oil rigs.

We asked who's left responsible for there ruins its people remain?  
 The answer was buried in replica, baptized by the village's cremation.  
 Demolition meant world-ending,

Yet the church germinates in your body.  
 We still add colour to flowers, to houses  
 You hold my shoulders, yellow jewelry catching the light of that place  
 we should keep.

We mean to stay.

**Commented [JJ9]:** I see that this is a 3-line stanza structure for this poem; though, I can't help but notice this line specifically. It seems to stand alone: much shorter and with a lot of empty white space.

Is it a possibility to either expand this thought or somehow connect the lines, while still keeping the 3-line stanza structure?

**Commented [CJ10]:** Would you like to intentionally keep this capitalised?

**Commented [CJ11]:** Streamline this idea.

**Commented [JJ12]:** This poem has a lot of strong and important material in it. I do think, though, that some of its ideas feel a bit scattered across the current structure. Even read aloud, I feel its seamlessness could be improved significantly. Perhaps exploring fragmentation further, and a more in-depth streamlining of its movement and structure so its strongest images and ideas can land fully.

Most of my edits here are line-level, focusing on grammar, punctuation, syntax, and clarity so the poem reads more smoothly while keeping its voice and imagery intact. In a few places, I made slightly fuller revisions where the original phrasing became difficult to follow grammatically.

There is a lot here worth developing, and I think further experimentation with arrangement and pacing could really strengthen the poem!

**Title First Generation**

Our government told me what I am : :  
of the first generation here, blessed.

In this country the Orthodox practice wide arms and hands  
for the needy.

quietly

My parents, the immigrants;

it is not yet Christmas, but in the spirit of the season  
Fathers stand outdoors tolerating loud speakers

just as the first snowfall is  
illecebrous,  
lucent--

we are quiescent flakes  
barreling in.

constituting noise pollution : :  
ululating frequencies,  
surging auras

of being

trailing into space

Expansion is made for us too  
believe

As long as there is no disruption indoors,

that kind of party acknowledges -the  
sensational

like distant pulsars,

all new invites are molten

What we endure is passed on,  
will be passed down next of kin

I hold out my hand,  
so we may conflate despairs;  
my fingers orphaned across  
the blank winter air.

**Commented [JJ13]:** Strong opening premise. I wonder if some later sections could connect back to this more explicitly so the poem's thematic thread feels almost tighter.

**Commented [JJ14]:** This feels a little grammatically incomplete. Unless this is intentional, disregard.

**Commented [JJ15]:** Interesting diction choice. Might be worth considering this word's rarity. Does it sharpen the poem or pull the reader out for that same reason?

**Commented [JJ16]:** Is this meant to be read as "to believe" or its own clause for "expansion is made for us TOO"?

**Commented [JJ17]:** The spacing and staggered layout is internationally experimental; but, in a few paces like this one, it makes the syntax hard to follow aloud. Perhaps a few sections could be made slightly more legible aloud so the emotional/thematic movement comes through more clearly.

I am also wondering if the fragmentation of the right-hand side of the poem can have a more impactful goal. Is this oppressing / arguing against the narrator? Or is it continuing its thoughts?

**Commented [JJ18]:** Moved this to the other side of the poem. It's a nice play for structure. Just a suggestion!

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**Commented [JJ19]:** Love the diction here.

their smiles crimping

~~crimping~~ the shape of worship--

impermeable.

Enough room for a  
cold carol :

*Let it snow.*

*Let it snow.*

*Let it snow.*

**Commented [CJ20]:** Possibly my favourite of the 4! This poem has some of the strongest thematic material in the set, but it also feels like the one that would benefit most from deeper substantive revision. As I mentioned, the fragmentation and spacing seem intentional, though at times they make the syntax and progression difficult to follow. The poem's strongest threads are identity, public visibility, inheritance, and the idea of being framed as disruption or "noise," and I wonder if a revision could work toward braiding those ideas more clearly so the poem's movement feels more cumulative and its ending lands with greater force.