

DARNELL "DEESOUL"



Vallejo, East Oakland,
Antioch, Pittsburg,
Stanford • 1999

CARSON

I Think of My Grandmother, Still Waking

By six in the morning, she is already
out of bed, I'm sure.
Goddess of Afternoon Naps, Granny has never
been one to lay down for long.

The roosters are most likely sounding their morning alarms
while Granny makes the first coffee pot.
It will drip until my grandfather traces the scent
back to the kitchen's black and white tile,

garden sunlight pouring in all patchwork,
or whatever you call it when clouds seam the Oakland sky like that.
By ten in the morning, she will have already talked to her sister
for three hours, each word spilling time backwards

until they are at the genesis of their first conversation.
Even in quarantine, they will always find something to say,
Granny commenting on how well her plants did this California winter,
or Auntie talking about how all the "casinas" in Vegas were shut down,

their Louisiana drawls peeping out for a playdate.
My Granny calls me, a surprise to both of us,
to assure me that she and Grandpa are okay.
Oh, we doing just fine over here, Darnell, she says,

drawing out the *ell* like a tub of bathwater,
You know I don't like to leave the house anyway.
And I do know, my grandmother, ever wary
of driving at night and these "crazy people" and the traffic at Costco.

I can see her at that bedside window she loves,
gazing at a street she's never seen so empty, remarking how dirty it still is,
all the bad things stopping at her front gate, unable to touch her,
her fence a ward against evil even Jesus is jealous of.

I think of her, every day, still waking in her joy,
still laughing at the sight of a new sunrise
sitting somewhere adjacent to the right hand of the Father,
giving thanks for what has not yet happened.