

This is

for the days spent trying to wear your name;
trying to figure out the point
of growing a tongue, asking what is left
to say beyond the obvious,
the oft-repeated

*from it gave me a voice to I found myself
in the cupboard I'd forgotten I was living in
for without this I'd be dead,*

being under construction,
for *self-assembly is best done with a squad,*

the root and fruit of stem,

more eyes than you can count, a world of undiscovered *yous*.

Amina speaking home into being,
writing your spirit a house, inviting blood to visit;

Roger turning paradise into a pocket book,
teaching the art of planting flags, to say
I'm from

a treasure map to this skin
you will make yourself, a path
through dark, uncharted waters,
to sea dragons named *the future*.

gifting what was not given, but found

for those who look in the mirror but don't see their reflection
yet, who'll find it later, hidden, shelved,

the power to choose your beginning,

the gift of being remembered, of being able to forget

the strength to comfort the sky,
fragile as sand,
when it's set on fire, threatening to fall as glass,

for everyone who text makes flesh,

feeling less alone, that even concrete wants your breath,
until the trees and blocks lean in to your lips, and pigeons two-step to your eardrums,
knowing this life has worn your face before (and still does - even now),
knowing at least one other person's name is *why*.