

Amber Adams

The Battle of the Eclipse

“There is no suicide in our time / unrelated to history” —Denise Levertov

Just imagine: light fading from spears
and desert pinnacles, Lydian & Median warriors
looking to the sky to see their downfall foretold.

Currents of shadow bands fanned
the battlefield as the moon bit through
the sun, a sudden disappearance of day. The war stopped

as three celestial bodies, an ellipsis,
came into perfect alignment. I dream
of all wars that didn't lead to your suicide.

What does it take? What doesn't it take?
There in the sky, your unfinished
life hangs in the cerement clouds.

I keep coming back to it: the way your mind
turned on itself—became war itself—after endless,
elliptical rotations

between here and Iraq. Inevitable
deployments, inevitable danger, inevitable
heat, inedible MREs, incomings,

invasion of phosphorus dreams, insomniac. A fugue
state let slip your own birthright, a boy
looking up at the sky with a pinhole

camera made of cardboard and aluminum foil. Awe
is something so easy to create that we forget.
Any eclipse is worth stopping for...

any suicide is an eclipse.