Okla Elliott is an assistant professor at Misericordia University. He holds a PhD in comparative literature from the University of Illinois and an MFA in creative writing from Ohio State University. His nonfiction, poetry, short fiction, and translations have appeared in Cincinnati Review, Harvard Review, Indiana Review, The Literary Review, New York Quarterly, Prairie Schooner, A Public Space, Subtropics, and elsewhere. His books include From the Crooked Timber (short fiction), The Cartographer’s Ink (poetry), The Doors You Mark Are Your Own (a coauthored novel), and Blackbirds in September: Selected Shorter Poems of Jürgen Becker (translation).
CHICAGO LOVE STORY—OR: THE VEHICLE LURCHES THREATENINGLY

Ancient children tussle on the grass.
They are at serious play.
We walk past them, leave them
to their ancient ways.

Hold my hand; it is yours.
Lick the plum pulp of my tongue; it is yours.

We translate the sidewalk’s prose
into poetry.

[Forgive my Romantic excess. Forgive
my romantic excess.]

A helicopter flies over Chicago,
and I pretend Plato pilots it.

[He is searching for us, but we duck
into an alley.]

Steam rolls from our mouths,
our heat warming the world.
I recall to you our expert fucking
from the night before.

[The best sex is sex
you shouldn't be having.]

What is it about you?, I wonder.
But I know.
It’s the pinwheeling tilt
of your scintillating lilt,
the slow sway you enter every room with,
the way your words singe the air.
There, over there, the helicopter is landing.
The vehicle lurches threateningly,
but the passengers step out, unharmed.

Let’s go in here, I say, pointing to a hip establishment.
I have a strong craving for hot coffee.
That is all I want right now, and I do not question it.
I am questioning nothing today.