ELEGY FOR A GAMBLER

1. The most difficult stages of grief, the ones at the beginning, allow your voice to keep me awake at night. Morpheus, the god of dreams, visits me every night, taking on your slouch, thin limbs, and beer gut, trying to get our memories to overlap. I need to remember you the way I remember the scent of rain covering asphalt, the way I remember the intense smell of chlorine in the indoor pool where we were both lifeguards.

2. Yesterday, a raccoon took mica marbles from a vase in my backyard. She left a garden path of them to tell other raccoons where she went. Or maybe she marked the path to remember where to get more marbles. It also could have been a Hansel and Gretel trail, but more permanent. How was my home suddenly her home?

3. Ants hibernate under the soil all winter. When they come out, they leave a scented trail behind to tell other ants where to find food. When they deplete the food source, they move onto another. The original trail fades. In Dali’s *The Persistence of Memory*, memory decays: time melts and decays with ants crawling on it like a carcass. As time passes, reality and memory match less and less.

4. In the National Archaeological Museum in Naples, all the dice from Pompeii are arranged in neat rows, some are perfect cubes, some rectangular cuboids. I thought when I first saw them that maybe the Romans didn’t know that a die should be a perfect cube. That a couple thousand years means that we know how cubes should be. The truth is that they knew. The dice found in Pompeii were weighted, some were just better at hiding it. Does any gambler actually believe she will win?

5. A few years ago, the House of Gladiators in Pompeii collapsed. Now, crumbled bricks and textbook pictures are all that is left of it, which will eventually fade. What I am saying is nothing lasts, and we are all cheaters gambling time.