

# *countless stars*

After *Starry Night*, Vincent van Gogh

MCKENNA THEMME, MFA PROGRAM SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

I still taste the golden wisps  
of stardust, dancing across the midnight blue  
as tangs of home-squeezed grapefruit juice  
in the middle of the night. And I still

hear the prayers of our parents visiting the  
chapel, permeating my childhood nightmares—  
almost like lullabies lulling me to sleep  
when I can't fall asleep on my own. And I still

touch the lingering memory of your cloudy  
blue eyes, threatening to spiral out of my  
mind like turbulent riptides escaping the sea,  
at the disappearing horizon line. And I still

tuck away your hand-written letters  
imprinting loss and grief over everything:  
the looming darkness in the foreground of the  
landscape we ran through together.

But I can't see the song anymore, drifting in  
and out of darkened windows, like the  
empty chapel whose candles and  
prayers have long burnt out. And I can't

touch the threads of gold weaving in and  
out across the quilted mountains—a halo of  
life once surrounded the crescent moon and will now  
surrender its own existence. And I can't

taste the golden wisps of stardust  
struggling to supernova beyond  
their painted forms, invisible black holes  
that suffocate the lives of countless stars.