

Are we having a revolution, or is it something else?

you're pretending this isn't your life

but in Annandale, New Jersey in 1991
my 6th grade teacher unfurls the atlas out of its metal case
frantic she snaps her wooden pointer on Germany
Berlin is here she says pay attention
you are living through change she says
the wall is coming down

you think it's going to happen some other time

but it's 1995 in Tulsa, Oklahoma
in 10th grade History class Ms. Bloom is crying what's left
of the Murrah Federal Building is a smoking crater we watch
silent open mouthed as the news anchor adds numbers to the death toll
they think an American did this

you'll realize you were alive now

in Oklahoma City in 2001
inside The Red Cup Coffee Shop Tif says
Cris we're under attack and I hug her for a long time
we watch two towers from far away
New York City billow black chimney smoke
our coffee is cold she says
oh my god people are jumping

when I was your age the war was starting
in Austin, TX in 2003
in the Book People parking lot the bumper sticker on Staci's car
"Attack Iraq? No!" is too late
inside there's a big display of nonfiction books all about government scandals
I buy a windchime and a vegan cookbook but I'd rather go home
get stoned and talk about hope and God

at least I knew what happened to me
when in Dallas, TX in 2010
Alison and I watch a video on the local news
a man is weeping on the shore of a swamp
in Louisiana just yesterday it was a protected ecosystem
now it's an oil marred wasteland I remember
the yellow frog I found out of place on the sidewalk
in my neighborhood when I was 8

we had no principles
in 2017 American and it's summertime at the border
we stand silent as toddlers wail and mothers beg
in American in 2017
we ICE honest families
I think of my hardest working friends
Humberto Paloma Maryuri
lo siento te amo por favor perdoname

there were things I did
in 2020 at home in Dallas
the morning The New York Times printed

names of coronavirus deaths

my robotic scrolling halts on Lynika Strozier

age 35 research scientist with golden hands

there are thousands of names here

here are thousands of people I'll never get a chance to meet

it was me doing nothing

when a few days later

Derek Chauvin murdered George Floyd on the street

in a primetime daytime 2020 livestream

it was me doing nothing

when the world watched George Floyd cry for Mama

you're pretending this isn't your life

you think it's going to happen some other time

you'll realize you were alive now

here

in 2020 America

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