

## **Away**

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Signs welcome visitors  
across the Powhatan.  
On this side of the river, I'm told,  
is T-Jeff's poplar forest retreat,  
and, past that, Sheetz and Liberty.

They serve plantation mint tea here,  
where I hear the nearest Black woman  
through my headphones. I sit wordless  
at the name of this place. Lynchburg,  
christened for a man who led mobs  
under a sun so hot it burned white.

It's local tradition to bow at graves that name  
the dead. Snakes hide in wild violets,  
while I sit lakeside and see my body in water.  
We seem to have the same storm each night,  
that leaves the air drenched when it ends.  
I go to sleep knowing people lie  
in the ground below me. When I wake,  
I'll find my way back to the trees,  
where nothing rises up  
like morning mist.