

JARED HARÉL

## The Great American Eclipse

I saw the decapitated sunflower of it  
from an arcade parking lot  
off Route 110.  
My two kids were in there  
giddy, buzzing—  
while my mother shoved tokens  
into jittery fists. I stepped out—  
my head was killing. I could no longer take  
the artificial clinking of ticket dispensers  
and mock jackpots  
over stained carpet floors. Days before,  
I'd been *let go*: a phrase  
so passive, so incidental and plain  
like the slightest ease  
of fingers from string. I moved  
past Laser Tag, a few kids drowning  
in a pit of plastic balls,  
and that greased prize counter  
like an exhibit for madness. Outside  
the August light had dimmed  
to purple ash. The air felt cooler and rimmed  
in stillness like a spacecraft  
over Long Island's turnpikes and malls.  
I thought of my children  
backlit by tilt-screens,  
wholly thrilled  
to be present and rich.  
Then suddenly I rose  
up up and away—a small, hollow orb  
into darkening skies.