

AMI PATEL

Wanting is the way to free

I'm saying I have nothing to prove. The world also belongs to me.

—James Baldwin

I'm here to lick this precious earth
like a sugar-rimmed bowl of berries.
I'm here to grasp it grandma-close
like a bundle of lavender, let it tickle
each of my fourteen nose hairs

or all the tomorrow harmonies
that I hum, always feel
in my more than five senses.
I want to line up all of my gel pens
and say *hello, beautiful colors, yes*

Turns out I'm no stranger to scarcity,
that lint-lined pocket we're sewn into,
but I'm unstitching. This dimension
is mine. And other dimensions too,
but I don't mean *mine* like ownership:

while I inhale. I want to grab its arms
and dance, not to some snooze-stuffy
waltz, but to a 90s bump and grind,
a hip shimmylicious cumbia,
a bounce-brazen bhangra,

I will see you in my daily walk.
Then I'll eat with my mouth open,
and we'll share in this portal.
I will preen and wear soft materials
made of what, I don't really know
because I haven't spoiled myself.

I mean *mine* like equilibrium,
like surrender, like putting my hand
in the ocean and when I pull it out,
the salt and sand stick to me,
and I can always put it back in,

watch all of my possibilities swirling,
until next time. And next time,
I rearrange the drying grime
and tug it onto me, like a rough
flank of a rhinoceros at play.