

# VIKING SHIPS IN LOS ANGELES ~ BRANDON BROWN

The simple have their slogans, and the wise their proverbs.  
A builder has wood, rough and lifeless in piles.  
My eyes, they have your eyes. My breath mixes with your breath.  
Once, we drew a map to your house on a brown paper napkin and sailed  
through neighborhood alleys like Viking ships  
until we reached your staircase, its flickering light bulb  
suspended above us like some artist sketched it  
over our heads to show everyone that our brains were full  
of ideas. Really, we were just dreaming of buried treasure  
and our hands on each other's bodies,  
tracing one another's mouths with our tongues. Here,  
on these same steps, our fingers now have  
another set of fingers to hold and study like hammers or worn-faced coins.  
And it's here where I have built for us a tower,  
one that stretches up from the planks of the creaking deck under our feet  
so that when you and I scale it, we can look out  
over all the familiar houses, yapping dogs and divorcees sunbathing in their backyards.  
Each time I cup your face in my hand, I know that I'll be with you  
as my hair grows longer and my clothes become old. I know  
that if you leave your body before I leave my body, I'll carry you down  
from our perch like wood from the pile, polish two coins  
with my trembling fingers, and rest them on your eyes as you begin  
to float down the tar-black river on a bed made of flowers and sticks.



Brandon Brown was born in Birmingham, Alabama and moved to Los Angeles, California in 2009 to attend graduate school, where he received a Master of Arts in Theology. He currently serves at a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing permanent housing solutions and resources for families experiencing homelessness. You can follow him on Twitter @yourmoneyisours.