

Fires and Books to Read

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Couldn't Find a Flashlight, Moonlight Will Have to Do

Do people like music because it makes them feel the way the ocean does?
Like they're at the ocean? In it?

Looking out at a vast expanse of something they can't begin to know
Or understand, but they seek it, they seek
The way it feels when the water seeps into the
Edges of their jeans

And over their fingers when they rake their hands through the sand
When they sneak out late at night, at midnight,
To feel the rhythm snaking up into their bones
Pumping like their heart
When there's nothing there to see?

When the light is gone, they know
It's still there
Breathing heavy and salty and washing over them
In an all-encompassing
Sigh

And like religion, they feel connected to something
They can't always see, or touch, or
Hold for too long in their hands

I believe in music: it's everything
It's that feeling of the waves still taking residence
In the contours of your stomach and chest

Late into the night
Long after leaving
A residual calm that rushes over you
Until you don't feel like you need to

Know, I mean
So we keep going back
To the water side

Keep playing and replaying

And hoping and praying
Because we like the way it makes us feel safe
In uncertainty

Da Vinci Made This Sky

Notice how you have to focus your eyes to see the snow outside the second story window.

The one facing the orange brick
Grey grout eyelids
Your focus shifts and you've become the
Worn black gutter
Peeling paint
In all the places

Your tongue used to
 Slip off the windowsill
 And into a freezing sky
 Cross hatches like
 Heather
 Like the hearth
 Crackling in static limbo

Your hands find their pin
Pricking resting surfing
On black keys
Clicking
Like a camera

 Down
 Down
 Down

The orange bricks
Grey gaze
Grey eyes
Like grout filling all the places
The empty ones
That dig their claws in and climb
The black gutter
Peeling off the paint

 Your tongue fell off

A long time ago.

Before, in august, or was it February
And now it has found a new home
Climbing up onto walls
It doesn't own
And trying to gain shelter from the snow
The crosshatch hearth heather
But only the paint peeled, and the grout held
Foundation strong held in hands that
Aren't yours
And your mouth is lonely all the way up here
Tinted orange
Grey eyes
Begin to slip
Slip
Too

Stay, Stay, Stay: Artists Cut Their Ears Off

When I go to sleep, now,
My eyes are a weapon
And a shame
They work against me
Trying to reclaim
A fragment of who I was before I met you

But I feel changed

The nighttime doesn't threaten me
With empty pockets

And the bleeding songs
That ooze into my floorboards at night
They're warmer now, I got a rug
They aren't cold and icy and trying

To take me away from my dreams

You woke me up
From a dream of a year of wishing the sun would rise faster
Faster, faster, I tell myself
Why aren't you moving
Your mind needs to be moving

All the time

You woke me up by putting me back to sleep
By resting your head upon mine
In a greenhouse
On the 6th floor
Plant limbs stretching out instep
Through honey and angel wings
And cranberries littering

This floor

You put me to rest again, in my head

In my busy
Relentless
And pushy head

And told me *stay, stay, stay*

You don't have to move
And I never knew
that I needed someone who
Could stop this fluttering thought swirl

And I never know why I deserve things
Never felt like a snowstorm resting its head
The way the snow finally reaches the ground in a sigh
Arms wide and stretching into a breathing white skin

That can be me, now,

My mind can ooze into the floor the way the nighttime used to
The way the honey in the green room does
And it's because your palms are pressed
Into the earth
And catch me there, once beckoning

Telling me *stay, stay, stay*

Michelangelo Made David Without da Vinci

Growing **apart**

When we are **together**

And growing **together** when we're **apart**

You said it's hard to grow **together** when we're **apart**

But if we were really **together**

Apart wouldn't have meant **together** or **apart**

Apart would have been a **part** of me

A **part** of you

Part and whole

Whole and **part**

And **together**

Would have been a given between it all

A given

Not a question

David: Part Two

Thank you

For the rock on the hill and the rain

Thank you for the walks in the snow

In the oaks

Thank you for getting trapped with me on Oneida street

We walked 7 blocks

You laughed at me

Thank you for trapping me

In whoever

I used to be

There was no point in

Holiday break memory

Just like respect lost you

Clean break scrubbed clean and

Bleached by time

Lights in a Glass Castle in Greece

It's not about loving a person,
She said, olive oil dripping from bread
Mid-air
Words slipping like the oil,
It's about loving life

And she does,
That girl with blonde ringlets
The way I always wished I was
She lives
For life, she knows
We are meant to
Love and be loved

And by the Grecian waterfront
She sips from a stemmed glass
This life she sees and breathes and drinks

My hair is dark like those waters
And my words
Are less like oil and more like bread
Falling in pieces onto a wooden
Block below me, kneaded
And needing to be put together again with
Dough for fingers

But I love the way
I have new eyes through a lens
Can tilt the world and
Catch it mid-breath, mid-olive
Oil bread,
Massaging more flour into the landscapes
Until there's enough yeast for tomorrow's sun

I love this lit up castle made of glass
Glowing from within with the
Fire bugs I never knew existed until August,
That's just it, I never knew.

And she's right, you know, it's not about loving another person
It's about loving life
About this thing called not knowing

Do Streets Keep Track of Your Sanity?

10 hours ago
I had my head
Where I left it
Tucked tidy
Tipping
Slightly
In
This brown
Leather
Pocket book
The
Only one
I wear
And now
It's in the
Sewer
Grate again
Again
I have
To
Build
A boat
And
Watch it
Idle
Down the
Street into
A foreign
Tar
Battlefield
Not armed
And my
Hands broke
Off
Snapped like
Gingerbread
To
Catch it

People Become Important: They Leave, You Stay, You Leave, They Stay

When do you know you love someone?
Is it as soon as they love you?
Or is it something time decides for you?

Is it an obligation
You feel take over like nations
Like a gas station, some sort of tank you have to refill?

Is once enough
Or is it too much
To do the guesswork

Fancy footwork
And find yourself falling
Swiftly again down that hill?

They say love is pain
But I'll say it again
The right kind of love

Shouldn't hurt the way you were told it would
It should
It *should*

Feel like a surrender
A type of hemming
But not for clothing

For the jagged edges of you
That bleed a little
Every time the world

Rediscovered the parts of you that you don't talk about
But in love, do you?
Is it like rain?

Or is it like sun
Playing the drums

On your eyelids

Like the ocean plucking cello strings and
Tying each one to sea glass hearts?
Does it come on suddenly

Once something happens
To make you realize
Or does it play its cards like a rearview mirror

Inching until the object
Is just as close as it appears?
For me, I like to be sure
I like to be sure

What Do You Think of When You Look at the Stars?

To me
You're a strainer up there
Hollowing out impurities
And dropping them back to earth

Celestial perfection
Was never as real
As your stories about the past
You're there and you might not be
But yet you're there

You gleam
In whispers
And symphonies
Orchestrating wishes from people
Looking for ways to leap off
This snowy asphalt
World
And astral, fingertips
Topped with swirling light and hair
Catching specks of embers that
Are millions of years old

He asked if I think the stars are wishing upon us
In the way we do in our wonder
Out our smeared windows
Breathing heavily in the chill
Or the panes' smiles widened by gooey heat

And I know that meaning
doesn't have to mean
Staying, staining
Because they don't, and they haven't

Our trust
Is their beauty
And their beauty
Glimmers in glimpses of our

Dreamy, sleep-heavy eyelids

Beautiful,
And transparent

Chai Tea Must be Shared at Night

You gave me a hug for no reason
By the filthy stove top
Tonight, at **6:55pm**
Heat turned to four
And my heart caught between the
Metal grate
And the brick
Because I never
Want to forget what it feels like
Here, underneath the china houses
And swimming in
The evening
Simmer
With **you**

Mornings and Nights: Coffee at 4:00pm

I'd rather be
Someone's bookends
To their day
Be the bronze
Statue
That keeps the books
Standing up
On their dusty, creaky
Legs
Be the white collar
Black cardigan
Little red
Picture frame
On their desk
When I'm
Far away

Airlines Should Have Complimentary Booze

"My flight was delayed,"
Sprouts growing out of their
Phone and into their hand,
Here by the magazines
Quickly the words
Seeping of seething
Gradual upset like the wake
Left behind when a rock
Skips twice, three times

Looking out
At the restaurant across the
Water
There's a phone here too
Silence glinting in the way
A head turns
The lights doing cannonballs
And dives into the dark water
Yelling "Mom! Dad!
Will you rate this jump!"

Herringbone
Bricks lying on the lawn
Perpendicular pattern
Couldn't exist without
Each one

And in delayed flights
Gates abandoned for
Just another cinnamon bun
And in telephone conversation
Stagnancy hanging
Up a on a weary coatrack
Of anonymity

And in the way
He shook his head
Rather than her hand

And in the time he didn't say what he should

The path was paved

Flight, response, support: too late

Same, Same, Opposite

She drips
Like a candle's wax
Droops
Like orchids
Found
Between the set of china plates
And dusty records, posters
From 1978

She names two
Leaves the rest
For their shoes
Picked up like the mud
She doesn't want tracked onto
The hardwood

So as
Ants fall in line
Two and four
Three finding scraps
They have taken
What's dropped from her computer
Her bench
Where she's always late
And the third sits
Carved like a statue on her broken
Wood bed

She glows
Like a candle
Goes like
The car model
Found between the set of ivory plates
And dusty handkerchiefs
From 1928

She plays two
Says she will compile the rest

For the rides
That lengthen the talks
She waits all day for
And builds as if they were made of wood

So as
Ants fall in line
None and one
Two finding they're overfed
They are given
What's saved from her notebook
Her mixer
Where she always remembers
And the second sits
Breathing like a feather duster at the
Wood table

Picnic Table Paranoia; Comfort in Knowing

You'll never know what
It's like to
Be in an antique
Fishbowl

And I'll never know what
It's like to
Be running free
In unfamiliar streets

Hallways, Pushpins

It's the tiny details
Threads loose or pulled together
Taught like my stomach muscles
Sandbag pinned to my lower spine
Feet reaching out
To their lovers on either side
Knees smiling, cheeky
My cheeks ruddy with
The heater we still have to turn off with a metal
Spatula
My arms
Grow branches and then roots
And then leaves falling
To scrape the floor
Gummy and held
Above me as if holding the stars up through the tile roof
It's the feeling
Of the bobby pins hitting the tin
And my hair becoming like a basket
Woven into the air
Heavy with soreness
Toes dotting the ground
Like tomato patches
Ripe red fruit
Stronger for the vine, rounder, plumper
With time
Ripe red cheeks
A whirlwind of sucking in and giving out
Stars on the ground and in the air and in my mouth
And I feel like I am myself
Myself that I don't know
Without this hallway
And pushpins
And same sweet
Sweaty smell

Sleeting on 11th Street

If ants build colonies
Build and build seam
On seam like some sort of
Factory and machine
Does their life and existence
Carry meaning
If all they build
Goes careening into space?

If we wait and we wait
For one day to find
Enough space in our heads
To forgo what other people say
And instead try to
Live the way we see as
Worthwhile
Does the meaning coming after we die
When our legacy survives
Or is the legacy in living
And rides a wave away from us
When we die?

Does meaning mean lasting and everlasting,
Outliving or living
Does it need to stick like a record or our hands
To our cellphones
Or our feet to a frozen
Metal landing?

Or, like so much else in this world,
Fleeting and fleeing
Can meaning be
Like when it's sleeting
Not snowing not sticking
Not rainwater washing the sickly
Just here and there
Without a care
Of whether it will be there in the morning?

Moon Through Blind Eyes Is Never Full: Just of Holes

Some find it easy to say
They don't believe in *anything*.
They don't think about ghosts,
They don't pray,
They don't think anything exists
That can't be heard like their own name
Or seen like
A stamp on a postcard.

Some find it easy to say
That *it's not easy*
That the world is an anxious reality
Running from its own reflection
And in reflection, maybe they
Are just too tired to imagine.

Some find it easy to say
That *it's not hard*
It doesn't have to be—never had to be
Like tiny rocks stuck in the gutter of their throat
or their briefcase or their socks
but then the gritty parts
might get stuck in their hearts
in the arteries and, like electric shock,
it hits them when they're
on a beach boardwalk.

Some find it easy to say
That *the world is brittle like April air*
And they don't see a reason not to live a life of magic that
You can't just go buy at a gas station on your way up
These are the people who see the hurt and chose the laughter
These are the people who see the empty and chose the twinkle.

But if people didn't think the way they did
If people didn't wish and wish and believe in their wish
Then *the world would stay hard*
Not like a diamond,

And the diamond in the world that exists for those who think this way
Would dull
No, these are the people that the world's hand holds
This is the way to become full.

Washers Spin Like Life: Freshly Pressed or Ripped and Stained

Fearing death is like fearing the laundromat
You don't know if your clothes will be returned to you
If your cashmere will ever come back
Like your soul or your family's happiness
But in the end, you know you'll give them your clothes anyway
Because they wash them better than you do
And if they lost them or there
Was a hole ripped in that one wool coat you really like, the
One you got at the thrift store in Boulder 5 years ago,
It wouldn't be the end of the world
They'd just be off in the ether
Floating in a soup of uncertainty
You know it'll happen at some point
So for now, just gather your hangers
And take the gamble
Let tags be stapled and receipts
Be pressed into your palms to demonstrate
You've submitted however many items
It's not like your life is in their hands

With or Without

He liked Pink Floyd
Lived by it and died by it
And she wore pearls
He knew what it was to be mad and
To be with or be without
And to fear death and
To run
And she knew what it was like
To make warmth
And sun and order
Where there is none
She spoon-fed soups and words
Into the mouths of those who had none
He knew the dark side of the moon
And she was the sun
And they live through
This rhythm and on
This strand, here

We Act Different When We're Alone

The evil
Wouldn't be here if there
Weren't good people standing by
Doing nothing

Watching the flames like they watch television
Watch their dinners heat up in the microwave
Watch what their very ideals
Disobey
And yet they continue to disengage
Find a fire escape
And leave their values and beliefs
Burning
Flames
Choking the curtains of the rooms of what they claim to be in support of

And the smoke
Lisping, croaking
Becomes their voice instead
If all we are is what we do
And what they're doing
Is not enough
Does making claims to progress, wearing it like lipstick
Or sunblock
Eclipse their actions?

Or do we find too often
Embers clogged up in the gutter-like gilding
Of this country
When far too many have a hose in their throat
That they've failed to use
And the truth arrives
When it's wholly our turn,
The weight on our backs

And we become Atlas
Watching our metropolis burn below us

What Makes You Feel Better? Helping Everyone But Myself

My head
And I like maple syrup on Sundays
It's a sort of pressure
Between hard cover books
Like rain boots
And eating two containers of tuna salad
And if I poked holes in it
To let the pastry breathe
Would spill out and
And all that would be left is
Sticky amber
Viscous and cornstarch thickened
Feels heavy
And my legs can't bring themselves to move
Weights in a pool of the amber
Gets clipped like butterfly wings
Won't someone bring a straw and sip
Until my brain can breathe again
I miss the way my bare skin feels on the wood floor

Feels like it's full of syrup
And in my tea, sometimes
Like pressing dried flowers
Or building a brick wall from the bottom up
When it's hot outside
But I don't want syrup in my head
Like you do on a pie
I would be worried that everything but the syrup
People would shake me over their breakfast foods
Sickly sweet
Liquid
I would be the poser you pinned me as
Heavier in my arms
And all of me is floating like weight
And my heart gets stuck under the table legs
Gets stapled to the floor
Sip up the syrup
My skull will be free again
And the way I could see straight

Journalistic Messes: Beautiful or Wrong or Just Because You're Old

Excuse me,
Excuse her
I'm sorry that was said—
It's just because she's old
You said
And then you picked up
The wrench that was thrown at your head
And said
You said
"I wrote this
These words tumbled from my
Heart to yours
Through a microphone
And the microscope tones
Got burnished
In the stone that is this page"
You hate it? You said
You said
After you read
What came to my head
And said it would be written over
Again
Like foggy glass
And rearview mirrors
Tweaks and word choice, here
This passage is just plain bad
Well, look what fun we had
I think I'll
Have someone else
Read that

24 Months is A Long Time Ago to Tell Me He Knows Who He Is

Would things have been different if I had known?

Would I have broken your heart sooner
Than when you broke mine?

You taught me what it is to trust,
To take bricks out one by one off the wall we build around ourselves
A brick for your family, a brick for your past
A brick for seats in the theatre and ice cream shops
Down on main street

Until we are left with nothing but mortar slithering its way into
Our boots, our heels and our toes in the December cold
And all it takes is one step for someone
To breach this protective shield
And then they see all of you, all there in your now two-dimensional
Circle of dust and dirt beneath your feet
And you're standing in it together.

I don't think I meant it, I think
I wanted to think I meant it

But, nevertheless,
You were in my circle of dust— orbiting like planets around each other
In a dance of individuals
Joining when the constellations aligned like at the
Park across from your dad's house...

He was a brick.

That night on the swing set, another one.

I let you take each and every brick and
Turn them into sand between your two blistered hands
And string them instead onto your guitar

And then you show up, two years later,
Digitally telling me that those bricks you took

And the line you breached
And the trust you flattened until it could fit
Into my small hands,
Into the crevices of the limestone turtle and the lace of my white dress

Were just as two-dimensional as my walls were when I knew you.

You taught me, you taught me

To be cautious and to keep bricks in my pockets
When my wall is getting too low and I'm in danger of
Intruders.

You taught me trust and my own worth and I'm glad

I didn't mean it, because I didn't know

I just didn't know

Close-Up and Far Away: New Lenses and Some Lost in the Ocean

Why are people obsessed with eyes?
Because it's how we see the world
Or do they show the world our souls
They're distracting, or they're blue
Or they hide our emotions
Like a bust with a shroud over its head

I've seen beautiful eyes, **green**
And squinting in oak tree sunshine
That hold a longing to feel something they cannot

Blue, like a rippling ocean
Like taking silk fabric and watching it breathe and weather
That hold a longing to feel less, to care less

Brown, earth-heavy
Moist dirt tucked behind your ears and smeared in
The backseat carpet, spinning away from you
That hold too many feelings that are too heavy for them to hold in the empty spaces
where their cheeks used to be

And **gold**, torso painted
Like preparing for Armageddon...battle armor
A hotel room taken out in your name
That hold enough feeling to know better and too much feeling to change

Bits and Pieces: Nightmares Resolve like Someone's Resolve

Your mouth knows different words now than it used to

And you didn't ask me how I was

But you told me *you were sad* I missed your art

And I did, miss

But I didn't miss when I found you again to

Make it right

And step into the future with an open door

And a closed heart, closed to you

But not to knowing that *you're alright*

Fires and Books to Read, Instructions to Follow or Burn

I knew on New Year's Day

I knew when we took our time and
It was 11am
And I had pancakes in bed
And you told me not to get too drunk

I knew when you rolled over to
Listen to everything I had said
And you made me laugh,
And we talked about reading a page of the Bible a day

And you knew I wanted to read it all at once

I knew when I told you things
About my grandparents that I never had before
And when I felt like I could ask you
And there was no stagnant dandelion fluff
That clogged up our alike gutter-minds.

I knew when I asked

Wildfire or Hearth Fire

And you answered without hesitation
The first and it was what I said, too.

That's when I knew

And, of course, you asked why but I couldn't tell you

That it's between passion, something out of control
And strong and deep in you like a fire in the wood
That consumes you

And something safe and contained to
A picture frame, wood cut down compressed
The same everyday

I knew when I left feeling a wildfire in my chest

In my cheeks
Like every time I see you

I knew right then.

You said **Wildfire**, you said it
And I knew you understood me

And I knew.

Little Rat: The Truth is One With a Paintbrush in Hand

He hated the dancers
Said they were human animals
Unnatural, he stretched their faces
Out and made clay demonstrate
What it was that he saw when he
Saw their growing limbs
Or shining faces under stage lights
And gripping onto barres to steady their ambitions
And themselves on their tiny platform shoes,
Silk and bruising their confidence
Like the sides of their feet
But we look at them and see
And ode to an art form, to
Ballet and to the beauty
Of the females who twirl in
Swathed tulle
And work and work
Until the day they sashay in front
Of men like him,
Who call themselves artists
But he hated the dancers
And you wouldn't know if
You looked at her standing in fourth
Chin slightly upwards
Skirt puffing out at just the right place

What's in Your Head? Very Different Brain from When You Were 5

Green sweatshirt
Circle of seven
Pulled into the driveway right at 10
I missed the rocket
But I didn't mistake the chill between us
Between now and
The green we used to have, the
Chives hanging from ropes
And wheelbarrows

Wet Cotton

Hung on my chest to dry
Damp and heavy like my eyes
Like the shades on the window
As if four p.m. was
The same as a rainy night
Bitten off, and chewed out
And gooey with sun

Street Lights, Christmas Lights, Tail Lights, Head Lights, Inner Lights

I need you to know that
You are what people call magic
That people wait their whole lives
To feel something, even just a tiny
Porcelain chip of
And you have it in you, right next to your
Breast pocket.
Walk down 6th street
Let the cold take your hands off your
Arms and onto the frozen path paved
With lights
And feel warm knowing
That you have everything you need
It's just you
And you will be there through it all.

There Is A Man I Know, On His Final Cigarette

Over the phone **you can tell**
When someone is rubbing their head
Their eyes, their hair a jumble of threads
Without demarcation
All melted together, fused like glass

And like glass,
They sound like they're being rung against
With metal
Not like windchimes but like something
Empty and unnecessarily
Called to attention
They don't want it but need
Someone to listen

You can tell when someone
Feels like they've become a mosaic,
A hundred small pieces shattered
And shoddily attempted to use a soldering iron
To patch up their exposed parts
But they can't

And on the end of the line
They hang like their nails
Are glass digging into a glass
Side of a cliff
Pieces dropping below when
She left, when she said she never would,
When she promised forever
And then
Slipped out of his ringing fingers
Without a ring

There are too many splintered fragments below
And even his lips and lungs are turning
To glass, too

You can tell.

I Wish I Didn't Care So Much; I Wouldn't Care That You Don't Care

What's going through someone's mind
When they hear you've been up since 4:30 a.m.
And they ask why you couldn't sleep
But when you tell them,
They don't ever say another word?

What is it like to be so deeply entrenched in your
Own world that empathy
Seems to slip your notice,
Like a teenager out the back door?

Is it that their windows are too drafty
And it has cut off circulation to the parts of them
That care when they see
The wear and tear
Or is their fireplace turned too high
Too many margaritas this time
Smoked out from heat and intoxication

Stumbling around like
Someone without their glasses
In the middle of the night?

Can they drive a car at that height?
Or will they fall back down again
Third street on the right
Until they're wandering around
Dragging their broken bike?

I wish I could hand them the mic
And ask why they couldn't sleep
Why their eyes and their hands can't keep time
With other people's grievances
Maybe then we'd hear it
And maybe then

We'd feel like we matter

Water Buffalo

In Thai it's an insult but to me it's endearment
Funny how languages work that way
Something so heinous in some letter
Arrangements
With this tone or accent
Is just an animal in another
And a word for your sweetheart
Words flung together letters
Splatter painted and
Flung from spatulas
Carelessly but falling so
Intentionally into place
Constantly turning over
Heaving heavy sighs like
The earth
On its axis
Swimming
In a soup of contextual
Saviors

Everything Is Delicate: Ice, Lace, Fingertips Frozen

The yellow poles

Protrude from the water with

Personalities sifting through the icy shield

Below

Their soft smiles

Seem to focus and refocus like

A camera lens

With a coy habit of capturing

You when your head is turned

Towards the mountains, maybe

Or the geese or the lacy ground

Filigree boot laces

And drooping boughs

Made lighter by the

Martyr sun

With doily-like

Fingers you adjust

A checkered scarf and push

Me up that final and crackling hill

Back to the land of not-so-far out

Minds

Waltzing with a ghostly wind

And expressions

An impression

Of the yellow islands

A Dangerous Life From a Very, Very Inexperienced Life Coach

Should we do

What we're good at because it's easy?

It's like barreling down a one
Way street at one a.m.
Like sliding into clean sheets?

Feels like champagne has become
Our throats
And our streetlights
Speak louder in volumes of green
To match our pocketbooks?

Or should we do
What is hard
What takes hours of toil and heartbreak to even
Begin to get
*Because, well it always,
Comes down to passion?*

Where it's like we've become dish soap
Scrubbing at counter tops
Hands hot and red and aching?

Feels like brandy has become
Our eyes
And our streetlights
Are hollowed out in volumes of red
To match this burn within us?

I would always choose trouble.

Without turning our hair into flames
And our hands into eraser shavings
We would never hold
A blank page
Pooling with purpose

Bicycle Tires Are Tired of Resistance

Wind on 7th street
When I usually fly down, now I'm cutting

Through like thick butter in
The flour on the worn wooden table

Like hands on your shoulder at the top of a staircase
Bone chilling

Or are you finding the path of least?
Sometimes it's

The robotic voices creating wispy paths of falsities
From the television set downstairs

Sometimes it's the way he
Lives in interludes, chapters of

Fireplace existence
Most often, though,

It's in one word
From a scientist's mouth, or

In the form of twenty days in the front row of
The theatre that is January

And from your own future
Pausing in the middle of a four-way intersection

Blurry and palpable

I've Always Known The Difference

He doesn't like the weekend
Doesn't like sitting with his thumbs
Glued to his temples
Like mirrors, dirty and smiling to save from cracking

10pm turns 11pm turns 12am, Then an Hour

I feel most myself in those moments
Two chairs facing me
Their wooden noses softly tilted toward my jaw
My own jaw suspended
In laughter
Hours finding their way into my own
Pulse
I can feel it on my warm wrist
Cheeks flushed with
The moment

Georgia, Wednesday: A Broken System, Freedom Sheds Tears

If democracy *rests* its tired back
On the constitutions in pockets of their suits
On **fire** in the same way the capitol building
Shatters with **I M P A C T**
With impact the *silence*
Hits us all in the empty space between our hearts and our lungs, deeply
Until our wind is knocked to
The same barrel that's also (on **fire**)
Out by the dumpsters where
Americans speak in *pepper spray* rather than **tear gas**
The same dumpsters where tolerance
Lies on its back, alone and
A c h i n g x
And a line in the sidewalk licks the flames
Two sides: and **what of justice?**

Recurring Reincarnation: The Opposite of Receiving Carnations

I used to have this dream
About a white boat, churning water underneath white, too
My eyes white and flashing
Like my own legs, who seemed to bite the ground as if it wouldn't be there
If I didn't run
Teeth and sticky

There was a river
Wide enough that if you took your tongue
And tried to stretch it, taffy-like and laughing
Across from one end to another,
It would have to be a parachute

And I wasn't
Laughing
Just finding my breath all the way down in
My ballooning stomach
Like the sails

On a path paved with
What looked like dirt, I know it to be
Panting with fear—painted and crumbling
Like a Renaissance fresco
Built into a rich man's wall

Until our legs become one with
The sky, emptying out until hollow
And we've reached a tent
Pointed like fingers, like my toes across
An invisible forcefield finish line
White, of course

And standing outside by metal racks and a woman
Whose words tack onto our own coats
Like safety pins, that was this place
Filling up my legs like gasoline tanks
And my lungs emptied, an ebb and flow
Of white breath and white heat and white relief

I had this dream over and over again
So much that it wasn't, couldn't be a dream
It was a past version of me
Sunken in a shipwreck reflection of a dream
And a gasping white breath
When I'd wake up
Having relived a memory

Trying Truths and Tumbles

One

Hanging on to a leg
Hiding under the table
Hoping to be older, when will I be older

Two

Running cars
Rethinking your own skin like a restaurant order
Removing your hands so they can run away too, on a steering wheel

Three

Devolving home
Drumming on air and diner countertops
Drying the bags around your eyes and growing up

Watching Titanic In Your Living Room: Old You Like the Boat

You moved to California
Blonde hair you let it
Find it's notch in the bark of time
And turn brown again

I told you everything
And I was told everything

Now you have become just like everything
Told everything and I don't fit into that
Everything, because I won't let myself

Shoe Polish and Windows Down

Poetry burnishes
The edges that you leave out on the street
To the dawn, a sign on cardboard for free
I'm free
As long as the letters release me
Release every thought and emotion (*I feel too much*)
Down where I can see it
Trace and internalize
And know like black coffee in the morning
Like gasoline in her bloodstream
Like this one song (*repeat it, I said*)

It's like polishing dye
Dark brown and argyle lips
Like wax on my hands like gloves
Like when I can lie on my back looking
At a popcorn ceiling
Repeating that one song (*repeat it, I said*)

I feel encased in the idea of an existence
Random and pointless
Until we point and sort and search
And for me, I've stopped here: it's my train stop
Bus stop musings
And no need for cigarettes
I make enough smoke in my head

And poetry, well, is
The sharp edges of the wind
That wrap around me in a car
With every window down
Protected from monotony and drowning in the stars
In my vision and clouds over
My limbs

I'd be just a tangle
Of skin and lose myself in the drywall tapping for air
Without a **magic paste** that keeps me together