



winterbreak

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issue v • winterbreak



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National Suicide Prevention Helpline: 1-800-273-TALK (8245)

The Trevor Project: 866-488-7386

Crisis Call Center: 1-800-273-8255

Depression Hotline: 1-630-482-9696

National Adolescent Suicide Helpline: 1-800-621-4000

Covenant House Crisis Line (Youth): 1-800-999-9915

National Domestic Violence Hotline (TDD): 1-800-787-3224

Gay & Lesbian National Support: 1-888-THE-GLNH (843-4564)

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) Youth Support Line: 1-800-850-8078

National Hotline for Gay, Lesbian, Bi and Transgendered Youth: 1-800-347-8336

PRIDE Institute for Lesbian and Gay Mental Health: 1-800-547-7433)

LGBT Hate Crime Hotline: 1-800-616-HATE (4283)

**v • winterbreak playlist:**

- ♪ sweater weather by the neighborhood
- ♪ so contagious by acceptance
- ♪ there's no way by lauv ft. julia michaels
- ♪ winterbreak by muna
- ♪ false god by taylor swift
- ♪ sex by eden
- ♪ stop it (stripped) by sleeping lion
- ♪ I R L by dysn ft. prelow
- ♪ dancing with our hands tied by taylor swift
- ♪ tiger teeth by walk the moon
- ♪ still by the Japanese house
- ♪ pink light by muna
- ♪ you've got your whole life ahead of you baby by ider
- ♪ water under the bridge by adele
- ♪ the last time by taylor swift ft. gary lightbody
- ♪ surrender by walk the moon
- ♪ decorated lawns by julien baker
- ♪ blue by troye sivan ft. alex hope
- ♪ cain by exes
- ♪ navy blue by muna
- ♪ over by exes
- ♪ i don't miss you by caro
- ♪ the first time by kelsea ballerini
- ♪ everything by muna
- ♪ farther reaches by fog lake

## letter from the editor:

I wish I could say December was beautiful, that January slipped out of my mouth with the same eloquence as a figure skater, but winter only unpacked a million complications: half-buried feelings, blue seeping through gold, songs more intimate than our private dm's.

even now (as conversations freeze over), georgia never plummets below 30 so I'm not sure why everything feels *deadstopped*. there's this post format going around where you compare different song lyrics, but I was trying my hand years before it escalated. still, I'll climb inside another intersection. when taylor swift wrote, "you two are dancing in a snow globe, 'round and round / and he keeps a picture of you in his office downtown / and you understand now why they lost their minds and fought the wars / and why I spent my whole life trying to put it into words" & when she later penned the entirety of dancing with our hands tied & when julia michael sang, "we just dance backwards into each other" & when selena gomez echoed, "this dancing is killing me softly". you can see why I think it all blurs together – (want).

I feel like we've been stepping around the possibility of 'us' for a month now, and it's: dizzying, distracting, unparalleled. as slippery as the skating rink where January fell off my tongue.

when we were talking (braver, with some semblance of honesty – last week), I mentioned how I was taking off my eyeshadow & you said we used the same make up remover, "which is v cute of us" & I said, "time to go write my fanfic". & you quipped, "just write a poem about it," & I told you I could write a thousand poems, but I'd never want someone to see you as just a prequel to content. you said to write them anyway, so I admitted I felt similar to taylor when she said she spends her life inside a fishbowl & that I felt glass billow between my online presence & writing.

you said: "I'm jumping in."

*so what changed?*

to the reader: I hope February is softer in her undressing. & yes, I could write a thousand poems, but they would all come up short to just saying, "*I love you.*"

FOG + I exhale my breath the way you'd grace a smoke + like maybe this will steady my undeniable feelings + shaky half-truths + anxiety blown out like birthday candles + but maybe it was us the whole time + when did I become this good at deflecting + we hide in the corners [the routine of it all] + frozen the second it folds in on itself + fox trotting within a snow globe + remember when selena said 'this dancing is killing me softly' + yeah like that + through an avalanche of nanoseconds that shouldn't mean anything + [but somehow mean everything] + switch out the promise of maybe for a silence that thunders + the second everyone stops telling us what to do + we become unsure because we never choose things for ourselves anymore + only know how to perform for a picture or that person or the way this will look in three years + can't we be selfish for once? + forget about logic & statistics & miles stacking up like dominos + another man-made city to topple + but I'd let it all fall if you'd just hold me + have you ever hugged a cold thing? + tried to measure who could love the ice cube the longest? said you wouldn't be the first to blink? + we can both wait for the other to make a move but one day someone has to fall like snow in this glass prison + [see how even pretty things can be prisons when the dancing never stops] + don't be silly with my heart + it feels like a precise succession of motions + [one of those soap cutting videos but you're slicing through four chambers] + how many days can I go before deleting another spotify playlist + Moments That Could Have Been Something all blur together from christmas to new year's to calendar absence + and you can make as many 2020 vision jokes as you want but neither of us is seeing clearly + because these lines keep making me stumble + I'm sorry for stepping on your toes mid-dance + in this purgatory of almost + I write my friend and say I wish we could divorce people in our lives that we never married + the temperature keeps slipping from tender sunshine to bruised out cold + we only talk in periodical bursts + I can't deal with the person you turn into the second you kiss away distractions + it all circles back to classes & how when they stopped, so did anything between us + the polar opposite of how she used to react to a blank schedule + like absence made her heart grow fonder & the open whiteness of nothing + the hole that academic life left for a quiet month + made you disappear + there's only so many times you can revisit a thing before you already know the ending + [and I don't think I can do this again]

portrait: survivable height by Samantha Moore

15 stairs from front door to front door

20 steps

#3 corner second floor survivable height

a couch unfolded blanket fort for grownups

lava floors bubbled up taunted

perpetual glow of lights seasons too late

70s artificial wood paneled half-wall decorated with trinkets sometimes people

keefy dust shopping lists that one mushroom

all the little things you forgot

carpeted kitchen the drunk girl sprawled out

telling secrets and nonsense to her new love

trip over her heart every time

magnets spelling what we won't say or try not to pretend we don't

hypotheticals comparisons the truth

crude drawings of padlocks

dry erase marker become permanent left too long to root too deep

love note sealed into dishwasher door impressed

paint it over sink it in

love & promises in initials fingerprinted in steam

across picture window bathroom mirror bedtime water glass

wiped away full palm smudged



vines clung to walls and popcorned ceiling      getting wild dancing in designs we  
named insisting to grow in a place so stagnant  
slowly strangling realizing limit

Van Morrison      unsteady dance steps      matching heartbeats to  
rhythms breaths back to life      broken glasses cut lips  
dead apology flowers      tired amends

ashtray on bedroom exterior window sill      carnal purposes and everything  
else on display to the world moving by no screen to keep the bad out  
or the good in      it breathes us

incense and candles burning      burning  
burned like ignored resolutions  
canceled plans tied tongues smoke  
signals      red lights

a hole in drywall      your fist perfect fit  
torn posters      turned shoulders      words caught mid air and  
swallowed nowhere to go but      down

it happened right in front of us      this      we      fell quietly      blindsided  
we saw it coming      closed our eyes

the poem in which I break up with drywall by Tamara Panici  
edited by Jade Homa

baby            baby    baby baby BABY BABY  
baby I know you can hear me            screaming  
inside this            upside-down house    sofa cushion  
guts    fluffy and everywhere            the ceiling fan  
frantically wants to get out    wants to become a movie  
or a movie star            wants to be anything  
but part of a house            wants to turn on and off  
on its own    how funny    everything I understand

is a projection of myself            or you  
mediocrity is overcrowded    because there's one body  
too many            the special human  
talent    of being too human and    wanting to do  
everything    in a human shape    with human hands  
what            does the grass know    about us  
and (and) celebrities cry    when their wings  
fall off            the ceiling fan is    just like that



beatles' oral tradition by Morgan Boyer

In fifth grade I spread my legs out yawned  
McMurray Upper Elementary school's second floor counseling room

a heavy-set perm-haired paraprofessional in her late fifties,  
listened to me

*I want to marry Shin, the purple alien god  
from 'Dragon Ball' real-life boys  
are stupid boring weak gross*

She laughed and then told me

*Don't worry about it. When I was  
your age I had a crush on George Harrison.*

*You'll grow out of it I did*

As she ate her Giant Eagle potato salad with  
a plastic fork I pictured an eleven-year-old hanging up  
Polaroid photos of herself in her Sunday  
best next to magazine cut-outs of George Harrison

*Once I finish this let's go back to class  
It seems like you've calmed down now.*

Cross multiplication sheets thrown at me as sketched  
myself as Queen, just like my middle namesake,  
the para bowing to my foot and me being fanned by my  
classmates as I created new galaxies filled with one-eyed  
winged hourglasses and jean-wearing penguins instead of

*Blah imperfect blah fractions blah-blah  
Project blah-blah blah state capitals blah  
Blah typing class blah  
Blah Friday's blah spelling blah test*

*Blah your below average math scores on the PSSA blah  
What blah are blah you you going to do blah young lady  
Blah Blah when blah you take blah the SATs?*

classroom by Julia Snyder

Forty minutes warns the clock twitching next to the crucifix I lay on the table blurring your  
screens your chest feels tight you say so you pick at your collarbones

*I don't know why.*

I climbed into your backpack but I like the view from this window big trees and a bustling  
intersection where the walk sign is on for all crossing so I cross the room a few times and  
finally settle right next to you

*Like always.*

to hannah, the poet that I met on tinder by Violet Knight

In Denver I found a name

attached to a pair of winter eyes.

We talked so briefly

before breaking off like limbs.

I never got to tell you that

we paint our nails the same

or that your lips are a shade

of cherry coke. You posted

a few poems; I read them as

gospel, desperate to know

the notes you drew in the

margins. I still want to go

get ice cream so I can listen

to you talk about horror movies

& photography. You'll say that

jump-scares are cheap;

I'll beg you with my eyes to

kiss me.



god in january by Barbara Matteau  
edited by Jade Homa

handkerchief-sized patch  
    of lawn (a park) where  
we sit and dine on fist-sized  
    sandwiches of tomato  
and mozzarella. (I am  
    a vegetarian.)  
washed down by paper  
    cups of wine; we finish  
with cream-cheese brownies.

we are alone (although cars  
    course by in multifarious  
directions) – we’ve never  
    been alone before.

||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||

our paths crossed by accident –  
    a like-minded pursuit of the same  
book at barnes & noble, in the film  
    and theater section (strindberg,  
shaw, I don’t remember) – and you  
    followed me as I perused.

||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||

the world is so huge; I  
    am such a small speck –  
people meet and re-meet –

if there is no god,



why then? what  
then? if I wrote a play  
or story or poem, what for?  
tell me.  
(please.)

||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||

the sun slowly moves  
in the sky. we brush crumbs  
from our laps. I tell you  
of my day and you  
wonder if I will find  
a cure for cancer – months stacked;  
so busy – and I picture  
how you will nail the part of  
octavius by the time  
the play opens.

||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||

you kiss mustard from a corner  
of my mouth and trace  
the curve of my cheek. I fumble  
in my pockets for change  
and stare at you, head ajar  
as dumb animal  
– trembling – waiting for you to make the first move.  
(the mustard-kiss wasn't really a *move*.)

||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||\_||

the next time I see you is backlit

against stage. you leave

with another actor

but thank me for coming.

I go home alone. wake up

a fragment. peel another number off

my calendar (purchased half-price,

as january has already begun).

winter breaks in skies of washed-out powder blue

and yellow so much yellow

and III\_III and III\_III (I don't know.)

another day always happens.



pillow talk between you, me, and the pope by Sophie Foster

*a portrait of a girl who is not me but might as well be*

My mom keeps a photograph of the Pope on our refrigerator and I cannot sleep.

It's one of those hours that no one talks about; one of those times when someone, probably, is at a party, and I guess in some other place the sun is rising, but I am in bed and I cannot sleep, and the Pope is next to the picture of my preschool graduation. I woke up tired this morning (Yesterday morning? Should I buy a clock?) and I'm worried that I always will.

She wrote me a letter once, my mom, and told me she hoped I was having fun where I was. I don't know where I was, and I never wrote back. Pencils are too gray.

I saw on the news today that smoking weed is legal in Canada, now. I think the nun who taught me Biology would have very many things to say about that, but she's dead now (former Pope Benedict XVI is still alive and so am I). I called my mom from Cambridge. She didn't answer. It's one of those times for her, too, and I don't know how to work an iPhone, anyway. I am nineteen. I still do not want to know things.

I wrote an essay before I disappeared into the fourth stage of grief and I think it was about the Sistine Chapel (the new Pope has been elected there since Christopher Columbus' poltergeist thunderstormed into America). I was fourteen then, or fifteen, but I wasn't a girl anymore or a woman yet and I said Michelangelo didn't know enough. I could paint only sunsets and I saw the world in them. I didn't know enough.

on the eighth day by Tamara Panici

edited by Jade Homa

[\*]

god sits            in a room  
there is no light    no window  
no space    to unburden misery  
everything god encounters is a  
wall            a kind of wall

[\*\*]

god destroys        emptiness  
this    is harder than predicted  
it begins        the same way it  
ends        nothing can escape  
nothing        will be freed

[\*\*\*]

god        inside each human  
body        burrows so deeply  
& you & I &    &    we never  
find        that god        again

prayer: a disambiguation by Grace Gilbert

[  
how to earn  
    Light?  
mouth  
its vowels

[  
a line drawn  
    upward  
like song

when the cage opens

] something clean  
    flows  
out ]

    to pray  
is  
Interval

]

to rise at all beyond



to the girl in my ancient greek lit course by Venus King

i cry in my bed

she draws in her margins

i think we both have wings

like

icarus

may they never melt



metrorail weekend reconstruction begins with service adjustments

through system closing sunday by Olivia Serio

and here I am, four years later, still hungover,  
sitting on a seat that used to be orange, nauseous  
from alcohol and emotion and again

this separation between us feels like your decision.

where summer sweat sticks to cracked vinyl,  
I compose all the things I will say to you when you call  
to apologize, a practice we both know too well.

but three months pass and when I look up from my phone  
I've missed my transfer by five stops. still there are no messages —  
not even a hello. I won't ask you to remember

my sneaking out at six a.m. to catch the first train home,

only that for once it was not you leaving.

*step back, doors closing. please move  
to the center of the car.*

no matter the night, the song is always the same.

migration patterns by Cynthia Childress

*after 'everything' by muna*

*for pog, whose email is quoted*

when this sparrow felt the first nip  
of fall's breath  
dance across the nape of her neck,  
she took off on its trail  
heading North.

the world was inverted, it seemed  
but she knew instinct was her guide  
even as the others flocked  
South, South, South  
motioning her to join them.

she flapped faster to keep warm  
ignoring scarcity of food,  
feathers danced with fury  
in the terrible beauty of rain crystals  
until wings matted to her body,  
beak frozen shut.

this is how I think the dead bird  
came to lay in Kentucky's January snow.

behind the parka's silver zipper  
I shiver, too, a shell with no body:

what they call, "a mind that wants to die  
and a body that doesn't."

what kind of birds  
are we two,

flying toward the opposite of survival?

mere leaves *thinking we're trees?*



the mirror in the waiting room by Jessamyn Wolff

My cursive twists slow under the overhead light, under the line, *describe your mental health emergency*: I write the sentence, *my brother was killed in a fire last night* and it doesn't feel true so I pause before handing the form back to the lady behind the desk. There is a dribble of quiet, radiator clicking under a plastic fern, and then an exhale falling out of the secretary's mouth, a sigh from her swivel chair. I hear her charm bracelet, thick as a wreath, crash against a stack of styrofoam cups. *I have tea and doughnuts*, she says, carrying a tray and a paper packet of chamomile in both hands. I select an unglazed doughnut hole, take a cup and heave a smile onto my face. *Hot water's by the mirror*, she says, pointing across the room. I look and notice the girl sitting there, staring at me, bobbing her leg so fast my own ankle aches to watch. I stare back at her thigh rippling under grey sweats, her finger moving to scoop the black mascara slugs away from her tear ducts. I imagine her under the moon, shaking, too afraid to sleep after the phone call from home, sidewalk salt sticking to her boots as she moved through the night that shattered into morning.

reflections on geese flying south by Rene Simon

what freedom  
  there must  
    be in taking  
      wing away from  
  what instinct  
  says will  
  starve you  
s l o w l y

my color ate itself by Hannah Koeske  
edited by Jade Homa

up                    on                    the                    wire –

it                    turned                    from                    blue                    to                    yellow

yellow                    to                    purple

purple                    to                    red.

*there                    was                    another                    hope*

waiting                    at                    the                    corner

home                    of                    monsters,

diamonds,                    saints.

now                    luminous,                    the                    crying                    starts

i                    don't                    know                    where                    the                    color                    ends

i                    only                    know                    it                    was                    there.



moments of magnitude by Katie Mansfield

To honor the small disasters in my life,  
I've started a scale. Like the Richter

for earthquakes, but this one generates a number based  
on how much poetry I will write post-havoc.

On my twin XL mattress, you recite "Where the Sidewalk Ends"  
while we compare fingernails, and my seismometer heart

registers a 6. Then you show me your birthmark and your lip  
skims over my shoulder and somewhere a coastal city crumbles. 7.

You ask if I think I could fall in love with someone  
from another time period. Jokingly, I say, the 90s.

Timing is my greatest tragedy. You should know—  
the first poem you ever heard me perform was about a 10,000 year clock.

I am in love with the version of us that survives this night.  
The future me that, halfway across Snoqualmie Pass, realizes

you were right, James Marsden is in Enchanted, and texts you  
without thinking twice. But that would imply a promise about our present selves

neither of us can keep, so instead I write this poem,  
then start ten more.



4:54 am & i just got home from this waffle house by Jade Homa

*after goodnight n go by ariana grande*

& i know we both agreed that this would mean nothing / [you didn't even want things to go this far; almost told me 'no' the second / i let you read the poems [[i didn't / even write well]] / when i whined & said holding back only / made it hurt more & picturing you / pushed up against me / resulted in weak trembling [[i was being selfish; i was counting on your inability to see me in pain]] & that was wrong & that was wrong &] i don't know if we can break away from / this typecast / every time i fall, your feelings fall through / i ordered a single waffle tonight / because you affect me so much [you affect me] / & my best friend is disappointed / in my choices [i think you are [[you'll never admit it [[you have yet to say i'm wrong]]] why can't you tell me i'm wrong]] &] / i know & i know & / i know / have you noticed we can't go longer than 18 months without / one of us giving in to this / [but only ever for a moment [[one moment, one act of honesty, one vulnerable text where my heart d r o p s after reading]] / only ever for a millisecond &] we can say it's because i'm afraid of this not / being something, can tell everyone i'm incompatible with rejection / but you know that i know that you know that i'm really afraid of it being [something] / it hurts when feelings are gently laid aside / but it scares me more to think / about you saying you love me / watching netflix together / picking out groceries & slow dancing [or actually our bodies close at all without sex serving as a buffer [[ohmygod i don't mind eating you out, but showering together or fingers touching or breath on face

[[[whyamievenfuckingthinkingaboutthis]]]

or, or]] maybe there's vulnerability in sleeping with someone / but it's just a tool of deflection when my feelings slip [[useless]] – easier to forget this plummeting heart when i'm turned on] & / the honda stops; i get out, shut the door, check my phone in the parking / lot as dead highway churns [cars in my stomach] / almost 5 so the air is

freezing / it's sexy when i shake because i can't control / myself when your body is a variable / but not so much / when it's just from the wind / i want you to hold me [i ? want you ?] hands splayed warm over my stomach / mouth thawing ice sculpture [girl or [[heart]] or [[this perpetual winter break]] &] i don't have the right to say / anything when you've been so / goddamn cool about all of this / [wishyouweretouchingme] / why is it always so hard to set my affection down? when it comes to you / [ignoretheanswer] / i never ask for what i want unless / it's spoken as coded pillow talk / 2 years; one of us always slips / & ice sculpture [x girl] [x heart] is bound to break / still want you [still want] / nothing / just give me a hand job / it's the closest i'll ever come / to those fingers holding me

<friend ship> by Sara Matson

*for l.w.*

late exhibition / sinking into a / cavernous lobby / of navy velour + highball vodka / eying her  
stunning / smile, i become a / vibrant caricature / studying sodality / (intensity aimed at a /  
shocked bar stool) / dominated by / tinny lime wedges + uncanny / blueprint intelligence /  
smoking between / busted lampposts / overgrown bangs / roasting over vintage / bags + ebay  
sweaters / (these dangerously captive / wet fibers keep my / body tension when laid flat / to  
dry) / she was grown in a / vivid backbreaking quartet / glittering melancholy proclamation /  
nuances like bonds / find their own mellow or / exotic trajectories / staining fingertips / upon  
departure / she languished in / naked skins / her ambition worn as adornment / (moonstone  
retrograde) / broken barriers + inside jokes / spun like antiquated dialect / across tongues +  
neorealist lips / haunted neighborhood / tucked behind / dogged pencil skirts w/ hand rolled /  
ohio cigarettes, / their nouveau / rumpled linen catching fire / ashing into eyelashes / (like  
magic or dust) / we remained / two girls playing w/ raven feather ideology / fiercely loyal +  
fluent in silk shyness / while hooked index / over nose giggles / erupt belly up / to the bar / bras  
+ hoodies straining against / floor sweeping promises / soaked + distressed to gleam / (a unique  
ingenuity) / like ripe dark calfskin - the intentions / of a vamp / she of bashful bedside energy /  
(the fragility of sentiments) / pushed and pushed wafts of pulsing / authenticity into the waiting  
/ cityscape below

**WAFFLE HOUSE**



self-portrait as my broken dorm building by Courtney Felle

when my best friend says we should live  
together she promises me / a home. i lose  
the keys to my door & in looking i find  
hers sitting on the lounge / floor. swap. re-  
turn. someone on facebook says our building  
looks like nine floors / of basement. she finds  
my keys & we laugh during dinner like nothing  
can hurt us. we promise each other / family.  
we say we should bunk our beds into one  
mattress & snuggle / for warmth. for the first  
ten years of my life, i thought *mattress* ended  
in *rest*. we say when we kiss / girls we can change  
the sheets so the other doesn't have to touch  
someone else's spit / on the pillowcase. i wonder  
how kissing her would feel, how friendship  
elides to love. i tell her i want / to build a water-  
slide from our window & splash down through  
the construction that never seems / to end. someone  
on facebook says all nine floors of our building  
have ghosts & ours has / the most. i think of them  
when she flies home early for thanksgiving & i sleep  
alone, trying to keep / company, trying to keep warmth.  
the night after i admit my crush on her, our door falls  
from its hinges & lodges / uneven in the frame. i have  
already lost my keys again, & as much as i beg her,  
she can't find them / this time, not even after i find hers  
wedged into the side of my passenger seat. as she sleeps,  
i wash / my hair & the shower whines without pressure  
behind it. she promises me she still loves me *but not  
like that*, & i wonder / how to remove *rush* from this  
feeling. swap. return.

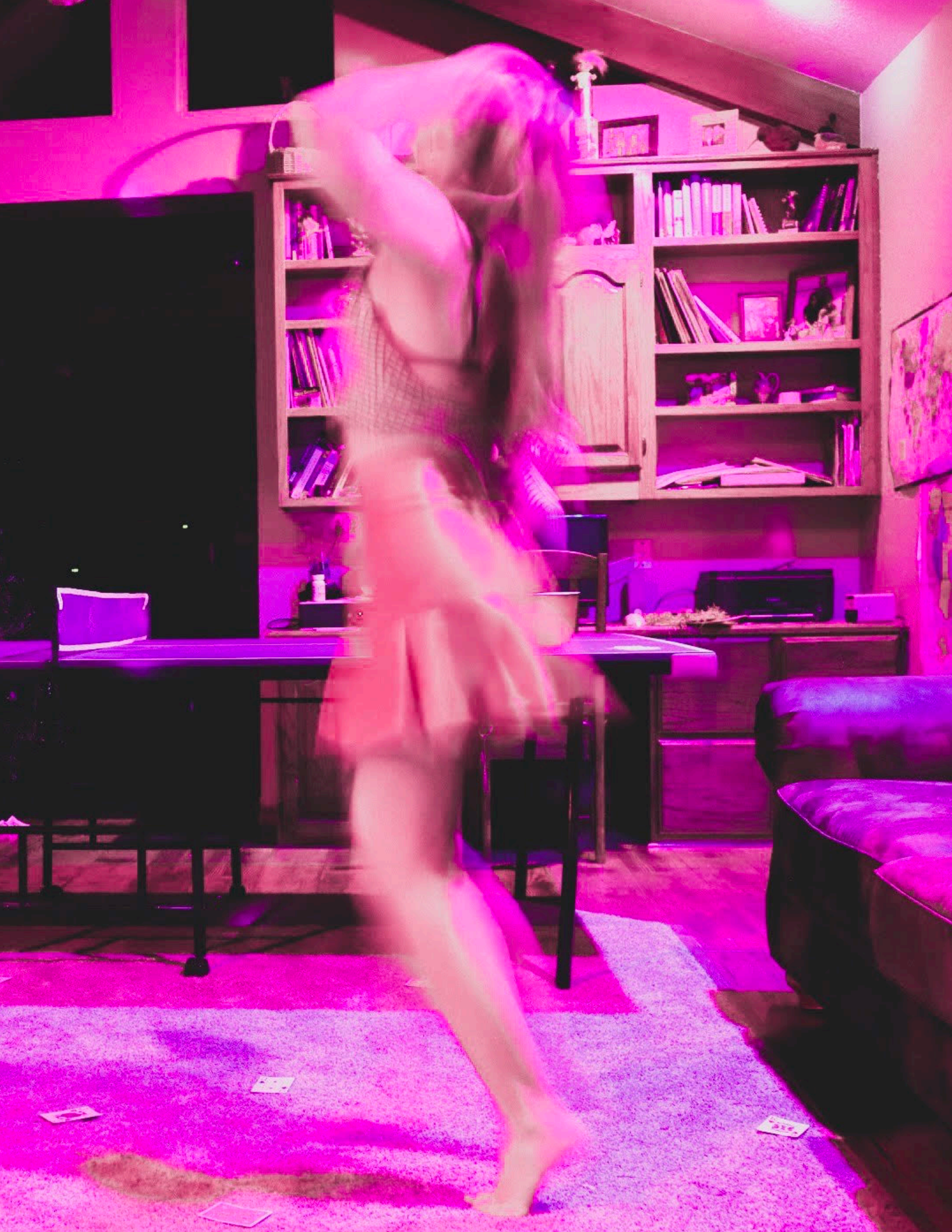
my friend says *dress* is the gayest taylor swift song,

but that doesn't mean it's gay

by Courtney Felle

i still remember the dress: blue with white seeds  
blown from dandelions by invisible mouths, swaying  
& dipping around her ankles when she laughed. & oh,  
how she laughed. like the blue raspberry vodka she brought  
from virginia, drinking & floating like paper cranes,  
pushed into flight by invisible hands. like the grace of her  
fairy lights, like the folk music she played in the evenings,  
like stripping to her underwear and dancing, lifting her arms  
above her head as if in prayer. we lofted our beds & she  
left herself no room to climb into hers, had to crawl over  
mine & when i fell asleep first, over me, too. *i don't want  
you like a best friend*, i told her, head spinning-drunk after  
a night swaying & dipping, my tongue swollen with vodka.  
not all my jokes about dating you are jokes, i see you  
shifting your hair aside when i unclasp your necklaces  
in the evenings & think about how easily i could push  
myself into flight & kiss you. play songs that remind me  
of you walking home. watch the weeds grow & see your  
dress. tell myself i love raspberry & blue rhapsody but  
really it's just you, always you. & oh, how she laughed.  
like the class readings we said we would finish but never  
did, watching films in her bed, draped in blankets & waiting  
for the petals from the flowers i bought for the dresser to fall,  
palms pressed tightly together. like pinning cardstock hearts to  
our bulletin boards, leaving notes on the mirror & above the door.  
like pulling our command hooks sideways & splitting cracks  
in the drywall. she told me to crawl into her bed & i did, holding  
my own want against the edge of my chest, begging it to speak

but the vodka stopped buzzing. *kiss me*, she said, & i kissed only her forehead. i don't want to date you, is that bad? i imagined becoming an invisible mouth & never again asking what she wanted, knowing *i want you like a best friend* & *i want you like a roommate* isn't the same as *i want you*. i imagined dropping paper cranes from our window and watching them fall, her own fingers unclasping her necklaces, the fairy lights unplugged & tangled in knots on the floor, playing my own music, pop & not folk like her, taylor swift on loop in my headphones when she wasn't looking. we unlofted her bed & bunked it under mine, creating a corner all her own where she no longer crawled over me. we finished all the raspberry vodka. i imagined everything stopping, no swaying & dipping in my stomach when she moved, no laughing in our underwear atop her bed. i forgot the pattern of her dress & imagined the seeds were paper cranes floating & setting to take flight, but i didn't forget exactly how the fabric draped around her. when she wore it again, every invisible hand pushed me into remembering & in the mornings, she reached for my hand with her eyes half-open, & i bought flowers & lied *these are for me*, & she called me her *best friend*.



breakfast in bed by Katie Mansfield

In the car, my dad makes a joke about waffles,  
and I laugh, thinking of us  
in the aftermath: naked and sweaty,  
fingers laced as you spew some bullshit  
about why indecision is called “waffling.”

Because a waffle has ridges and valleys,  
right, it’s this whole up-and-down thing

and I say no, flipping the waffle iron back and forth  
makes a lot more sense. Anyways, have you heard about pancaking?

What’s that?

Some middle school shit. When you hold hands, but only palm to palm.  
No fingers tangling, because that’s reserved For Serious Inquiries Only.  
That’s waffling.

Oh, yeah? So did you ever waffle with anyone, then?

It’s all so mundane. Juvenile, even.  
Two weeks ago, the administration issued an email  
regarding Asian hate crimes on campus, and here we are  
debating breakfast foods, because you walked me home  
under the guise of protection.

If I were a better poet,  
I’d say this is about resistance.  
Two brownish bodies finding home under blue fairy lights,  
laughing about our thick Vietnamese hair and our families’ obsession  
with cruises, as if our people haven’t had enough of boats.

But I’m just young and foolish. Hungry for something to sink my teeth into.

So I flatten my tongue harder against your throat until you groan  
and press me against the wall, sticky syrup sweet coated in desire  
and we turn over  
and over  
and over.



in case of lightning, break glass by Katie Mansfield

(i.)

sillage. used to describe the way a scent lingers in the air.  
from the french word for wake, or trail.  
fuck the french, they colonized  
our ancestors, but damn  
did they leave some pretty words. like coup  
de foudre, which i can't pronounce for shit  
but like the sound of anyways. literally translated, a "stroke of lightning."  
used to describe certain unforeseen events,  
particularly love at first sight.

(ii.)

five minutes into maybe our fourth time meeting  
& you've already knocked half my photos off the wall & i am wondering  
what the hell was i thinking when i offered that tangerine slice  
to your lips. i just want you to sit next to me on the sofa  
but you move around the room like you're sherlock holmes  
& the terrarium hanging overhead will help you deduce what i was like  
as a child. you want to know if i consider myself a free spirit,  
& my favorite poems, & what was the last good thing that happened to me,  
& i want to kiss you because i'm worried that if i don't i will blurt out something  
embarrassing, like you, or this. robert frost said nothing gold can stay  
so of course you're graduating, of course i will bludgeon this moment to pieces later,  
autopsy myself to figure out if cause of death was your nervous swallow,  
or when you said the pictures didn't do my freckles justice.  
but for now you're looking up at my lofted bed & i think finally but you  
just keep talking about the magic tree house series & the fucking boxcar children

(iii.)

i have never been struck by lightning but i can guess  
at its wake. singed forearm hairs stand at attention.  
the scent of ozone lingers.

[we fuck and I wonder if I'm going to keep it together long enough for you to orgasm]

by Micaela Camacho-Tenreiro

And the question is here on this countertop, too,  
somewhere past my back pocket but before your  
middle finger, impossible to make out  
in our reflection in the window. Baby  
watch how we displace the light, how kindly it  
parts for our tangled silhouettes, how it promises  
not to be what comes between us tonight.

You were laughing before my glass  
had even hit the ground — your voice climbed the  
walls like a frenzy of spiders. Something about not  
letting every broken thing become a breaking point,  
and then all the buttons on my shirt. That bottle of  
wine has been empty for hours. Now, I am breaking  
eye contact with you because I can't shake the  
feeling that my body is a land mine,  
and you are asking me how badly I want to be  
touched, and oh how I wish the question would not  
erupt into an answer, but aren't I already a field of debris,  
even before you make anything go off

ode to instagram sulking by Courtney Felle

in the dim-dull light of the fraternity party, my hair glows / green. i always wanted to dye my hair green, but this isn't / the night. this wasn't supposed to be the night for anything: told myself i would dress / in a canadian tuxedo like the theme called for, spent seventeen years living / on the canadian border so this is (almost) the same comfort as home, of course. instead i'm drunk / again & telling my roommate, "i like you as more than a friend," & all she / can say is, "i already know." there's a girl living across the quad from us who started / dating the girl randomly assigned as her first-year roommate, & in all the time i spend / scrolling through her social media, i can't tell when it began. in their first / picture together, she wears a jean skirt & says, "don't even know how I've lived 18 yrs w/out u 4ft away / from me at all times." her prom dress shines in green satin & i think / of everyone to already ask about my roommate as if she were my girlfriend, as if i knew / what to call her. moments shift so easily into the next & nothing serves as a life / line. in all seventeen years i spent living on the canadian border, i never bought a nexus. i never dyed / my hair. i never could determine what was green, glowing, light—of course / i'm colorblind. look how the girls look at each other. look how they look. of course all either could say / is, "i already know." this isn't a night that changes / anything at all.

sophomore year by Angelique Gross

edited by Jade Homa

the night Nadia lost her virginity, she climbed through my window / leaving Lonely Slick  
Pavement and Shining Street Lights behind her / she told me Tony gave her a ride over / he  
asked how she was gonna thank him so they did it in the front seat / & didn't think anyone saw  
because the window was so fogged up / and she left her sweater on / this isn't where the  
loneliness began / just where it became its own radio station / one more thing to be  
disappointed by / a grocery list of people I would love / if love was as simple as picking  
tangerines / & so (after school), the Target beauty department never saw us coming / every  
smuggled lipstick a righteous withdrawal / this was before we knew how to romanticize our  
sadness so we just had to live in it / all hot cheetos vodka mixed with sunny d and grace /  
Nadia was beautiful like a french country house / (charming and not meant for the city) / while  
I (ever rough around the edges) / never knew what kind of house / I was – probably a bus /  
never trusted a guy that liked classic rock because it usually meant he got along with his father  
/ & our mothers were a kind of ghost of futures past (so we felt bad for them but not enough to  
be nice) / mine had a vulnerability that cut if you / looked into her eyes too long / so I stayed  
out in the wild as long as possible to / avoid the lacerations – but I / am not my mother / &  
(even worse) I never will be / when Nadia began dating Cameron / (a vegan who wanted / to  
join the military after graduation) / we didn't talk as much / you: stumbling over an oxymoron  
/ me: tired of babysitting the last two / syllables of that word / found myself running across the  
football field / in the middle of the night / I could stay out as long as I wanted

weekend 1227 by Tessa Ekstrom

the last night of the best weekend of my life I did too many drugs with a boy I need to stop having sex with & even though I did too many drugs my substance abuse problems are in the past, I promise & my chest hurt & because we had taken so many uppers he asked if it felt like a heart attack & I said *I hope so I want to be taken out in an easy way* & he was like *I thought you weren't depressed anymore* & I asked him if he wanted to guess the number of suicide notes I've written in the past six months, a number greater than 1 but less than 1227 & the best weekend of my life didn't occur until the 1227th weekend & although I had so many good weekends & so many bad weekends this is the first weekend in my life that my brain isn't filled with TV static & bees & cotton swabs & nails on a chalkboard & any of the other things my anxiety sounds like & some of those sounds are in my head & some of them haunt me in the form of auditory hallucinations I inherited from my mother's schizoaffective disorder & I told him I still wanted to die not because I have active suicidal ideation & not because I'm reaching out for help but because he is so so sad & so so anxious & I told him I still wanted to die because some part of him is trying so desperately to die in ways that are so desperately familiar & he won't go to therapy & he needs to go to therapy & he needs to understand that it took years of therapy before I was married to a place I could call "better" for lack of a better word & he needs to understand that recovery is neither a straight line nor a destination & I need him to understand that & I need him to understand that even though tonight, during the 1227th weekend of my life, I am happy I feel healthy I feel whole, there is still a bone somewhere in my body that wants to take the easy way out

another misplaced love song by Emma Eisler

You come to me in gestures.

Fifteen, tugging down and stepping out of a shirt. Biting French fries down to the nubs and discarding the parts that touched your fingers.

I am trying to write my way out of love with you.

One hazy night on your Ocean Beach roof, I looked up and said, “The rain feels like freckles.” I was thinking about the bridge of your nose, how it must feel to occupy your skin.

I saw you cry, on your couch watching *Cloud Atlas*. I saw you cry at midnight on a Salt Lake City playground. Because I freeze up, disappear like a vapor from your life when you hurt me. My fault, my fault, please don't blame me.

I am trying to write my way out of love with you.

In Spanish class, you complimented another girl's curls and I wanted to rip mine from the roots with my fingers.

Why do I let you do this?

Why can't I write my way out of love with you?

You are punk rock or classic rock depending on which boy is watching. You are a girl who wants to cook dinner or you are a girl who wants to run away and live in a windmill.

Is love ever fully separate from hatred?

A Saturday in March, we got high in Dolores Park and bought (not yet ripe) Manila mangos. In the fogged over glass of our friend's kitchen window you wrote, “I should've done everything on earth with you,” then wiped it clean with your sleeve before anyone else noticed.

Some days, I do not want to write my way out of love with you.

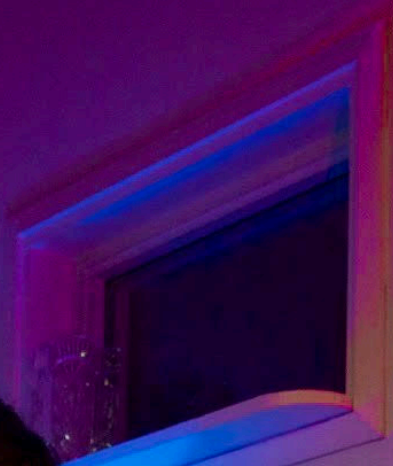
I reach for your hand, come back with flecks of nail polish, the smell of strawberry soap.

You tell me I am your one mistake, that you will never again let yourself feel *that* way about anyone.

You tell me to try, please try, to write my way out of love with you.

We are two kisses and a lifting of the wind, and if love is a jellyfish, then you are the part with the stinger, and I am the trembling water that holds you.

You are a girl of short skirts and 80s dance moves. You are a lover of Belle and Sebastian and glow-in-the-dark stars, and you are better than I am at letting go.



You talk in an almost whisper, but I never miss a word. You laugh like crazy—tears squeaking from the corners of your eyes—and I always forget that you have feelings and I can hurt them.

And now I sit on the cold surface of a windowsill, all star-studded sky over my head, the sound of talking from below.

You hair, your eyes, the way you move...

The smell of rain in the air, both of us alone in different continents, alone under the moon.

The curl of fingers around air, the bending of a head to see the clouds. Wavering skin, back pressed to the spine of night, and do you remember, do you remember, that first time you told me I was beautiful?

I am opening my mouth, gasping deep breaths of this strange balance, me on a windowsill, twenty-foot drop to the earth, you across the world, but close enough, still, that I feel your presence out there.

Just me and the quick moving flutters of night-moths.

Just me and my body's innate ability to fall in love and scrawl in red journals on windowsills.

So far and close from you I know, I do not want to write my way out of love with you.

I want to write my way into love with myself.



what's left in boston by Sarah Terrazano

Don't look back. I'm the last train crawling on its  
elbows out of the station. I'm the shudder

of the third orgasm. Cooled teabag  
drooped in empty mug. Don't touch me.

I'm the hair on the underside  
of thighs, razor-skipped. Lipstick stain

purpling the Corona rim. Fingerprints mosaicked  
in forgotten passwords. I'm tired-novel smell. Divorce

the Amtrak; this is our last season. I'm the trail of neck hickeys  
mirror-caught at dawn. Molars jammed with almonds.

Citrus under fingernails from fresh orange peels. Clippings  
on the lawn after mowing. Don't lie. I'm the first blush

of this year's red-turned trees —

the beginning of a new semester by Jade Homa

everything is coming back to me  
faster than you've ever shown your hand

king, queen, ace of hearts – [synonym] how  
one of us always folds until we circle the drain

one too many times & end back [ ] here  
am i a bad person for hating a saint?

anselm must look so pretty this time of year –  
with snow cascading down the abbey steps

i think i was foolish  
you can only love me in the sun

(& i – ever tired of playing distraction –  
want no part in this autumn farthing)

telling myself new hampshire will hold a different [ending] fullstop  
september, only to fall as quickly as the leaves

we play hide & seek through every summer ,, , reckless  
as birds strung out on a wire

with october there is order to crawl inside:  
planners & classes & a dorm too small to masturbate

you hate this [ever aching] dance ~~when—at—school~~  
kissmethroughphonescreeninjunedowntimebcyourefreefalling

college – i could never compete with that –  
always needing someone telling you what to do

wrote your thesis on the way my name breaks in your throat  
like an icicle that melts so murder weapon no longer

if we are snow globe whirlpool drain  
i need to drop us | this winter [break]



socks by Jill Young

The socks on my feet are the ones you forgot at my apartment 5 weeks and three days ago — they're faded blue with a red logo that I don't recognize on the outer ankles (or the inner ankles if I wear them on the opposite feet) and the elastic is less effective on one sock (currently on my left foot) than the other (currently on my right foot). I've washed them since you left but not since I last wore them so they kinda smell and I wish I'd learn how to do laundry on time so I wouldn't have to re-wear socks that don't even belong to me in the first place, socks that don't even pretend to match the rest of my outfit (black-on-black waiter uniform). At this point, the apartment has forgotten you and the things you took when you left (your toothbrush, my favorite sports bra, all the books you lent me) and I've washed you out of my sheets. I even deleted your Google Chrome account off of my laptop — the targeted ad algorithms don't account for you anymore. All that's left are these dumb socks, and even they feel wrong, slide down on my ankles, bunch crudely below my pant leg (the left drooping slightly below the right), and I feel stupid for thinking any part of you would ever fit me just right.

some other way by Sophie Cohen

You sit across from me at the coffee shop eating a bagel with cream cheese  
And chives. I stare at your lips. They are chapped and white. The chap  
Is what makes them white, I think. Your eyes are big, like I remembered,  
But you're not as pretty as I once thought. When I saw you, earlier today,  
I thought maybe I should turn around and walk home. You could fade  
Into the abyss of last fall with the rest of my blurred autumn, if I let you.  
But you were sitting on the railing that leads down to water. You were sitting  
And I knew it was you because you wore black jeans and a flannel. Early fall.  
It was muggy; the rain coming soon, but you had the flannel tied about your waist.  
Your hair was split and coarse. I could tell from the back. You were skinny.  
A stick. I remembered. But I couldn't walk away. Across from me  
At the coffee shop you bite into your bagel with cream cheese and chives.  
I stare at the table. The questions you ask bring me back to a colder time  
When I used to know you, and when you pretended to know me.  
No, I don't mind the chai. Yes, I'm getting cold. We sang Sweet Child at the clinic.  
They had big windows. Lithium; it has a lot of side effects. I'm going to have  
Lithium babies. Sounds like a battery. Nobody in mind for the father.  
Across from me at the coffee shop you finish your bagel with cream cheese  
And chives. You decide – it seems – you've had enough of me, and stand.  
As we exit the coffee shop I don't respond to something you say – and you ask  
With concern if I'm all right. "I didn't think you'd ask to see me," I say.  
And you only say, "Why wouldn't I?" before you cross the street to meet  
Some other girl, who maybe you loved some other way."

the difficulty in an event  
comes after: by Grace Gilbert

swabbing the mouth,

finding  
its language.

how are you supposed to  
describe it?

the way a thing finds home  
in the blood

i saw you from across the room  
tonight

§ i thought . my god

your hair is like honey dripping from  
the spoon into cereal at 9AM on a school  
day

§ by that i mean you're like a childhood  
memory  
soft § sweet § complicated

i saw you tonight and you seem different  
an electric charge is running through  
you

i see you a lot and you see me a  
i guess maybe we are friends lot  
too

but i don't really want to be  
because every time you laugh or beckon  
me over with your hand i look  
up and i fall headfirst Down Down  
Down into those rockpool eyes

With bright calm waters and isn't  
it amazing that blue is my favourite  
colour and green is yours

sorry that this took up two  
napkins but i'm trying to get it  
out before i give up!

i think the words you say are Magic -  
Magnetic and you pull everyone in so  
close you are a born performer...

last week on the beach you  
said some beautiful things to me...  
were those words mine?  
meant for me?

If so...

i would love to go out sometime

yes  no 

river by Grace Gilbert

*after Ben Platt*

for months i don't  
write  
because i can't pick  
a reality to

pull from

the river is spillage or  
sometimes the river comes apart at  
the beginnings

or

the river is something that gathers,  
breaks

or maybe it's a sentence empty  
of itself



saying yes by Jeni Smith

I love you with terror  
and wonder, vegas lights,  
struck and impending  
doom.

I love you with icy fingers,  
dizzying dips between each rib.

I love you like gutting a fish.

I love you with great  
jaws of need, stony eyes  
of regret, the whole long  
moan of it.

google search history by Sarah Terrazano

~~cheap flights from boston~~

cheap flights from boston this month

~~broad city full episodes~~

broad city full episodes free

how to cut a pomegranate

how to get out red stains

which broad city character am I

first date ideas

~~train boston to new york~~

cheap bus boston to nyc

dog big ears small body

airbnb new york under \$50

how old should you be to see a gynecologist

best relaxing music

do metrocards expire

directions penn station to queens

bars with no cover near me

~~how to make your spotify private~~

how to say I love you first

i cannot believe it's been one year

you are my whole world, my everything,  
my sun and my moon, my  
energy and my rest, my comma  
and my full stop

that's how i know we're those lucky  
people who find their soulmate  
young

i know we will never, ever end  
or falter  
or stagnate  
because

KNOW

will  
never ever  
stop  
loving  
you

(sorry for  
my shitty art

'skills' but after you dedicated  
that song to me i wanted  
to give you something too)



hoarfrost by Natalie Mercer Ramirez

Fucking cold. You are made of ice,  
like a tree limb bent in shimmery pose.  
Frozen and unreachable, empty eyes  
two small ponds sinking into the earth.

Brutal. I would kill you if I knew  
I wouldn't get caught, my fingers  
wrapped around your porcelain neck  
squeezing until you shatter.

But all the fire in my rage won't melt you.  
Girls like you don't die. You live forever,  
crushing hearts with a frigid smile,  
teeth like blocks of snow.

You rime your way around this town,  
coating everything in brokenness.  
Someday (someday), I'll be the colder one  
and bury you in an avalanche of me.

chances by Jade Homa

*after five for fighting*

we both get colds when

we don't sleep enough,

but I find myself catching less

when I'm

dreaming of those eyes

& I know New York is farther

from these

hands

than any

act of god

could

satisfy

it hurt me when you yelled at me and watched  
me cry and then you left the room  
to go into our room which means it's  
your room and my room which means  
we can't just go and be alone like when  
you were a teenager and went to your room  
So i can follow you in there because  
it's my room too and we can both  
get angry and break the dishes we  
bought together because they're ours  
So it doesn't matter  
you say things you don't mean and you say  
"i only said it because i was angry" but i  
don't know what that means because i've never  
said something to you that i didn't mean  
because when you say it i remember it and  
i lie awake and i think  
do i make everything about me?  
do i fuck everything up?  
do i alienate everyone?  
do i make people hate me?  
and mostly i think

if it's not even a little bit true,  
why say it?

because i think it is a little bit true,  
at least,  
to you.

