

THE YEAR WE ALL DID RITUALS

A Collection of Poems

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master of Fine Arts degree

MFA Program for Writers
Warren Wilson College
November 27, 2024

Director

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I

Mother,

don't read this yet,
my thoughts are still packed down
like crumpled letters, and some of us
will not quite get free—

-Jean Valentine

Ars Poetica

My mother alone in her room
sleeps for weeks
in a cloud of Estee Lauder
and QVC jewelry.

A wide threat of desire
pulls at my equator
I hold it there, breath in
and then collapse.

Tonight has a gauzy appeal
and the boys down the street
with their mercurial rage
shouting at the atmosphere.

I am a virus no one can kick
like a stone stuck in a throat.

I love them from here
those boys in denim
with nicotine fingers
and only one
has a car they all pile into.

Wherever they are going

I want that same trip
no message to decipher
just release and then

fulfillment.

The lowland winds stir
as one hawk, juvenile, red-shouldered,
then two, fly over the river.

Down the canyon
I hear their small private laughter
from the passenger side
speeding toward ecstasy.

I am just a body
silent and difficult
marked by what it wants—

But Not For Me

A single note
travels half-broken

looking

for a place to land
on a line like a crow

full of rough melody
working into the world.

My mother sold
the piano
for ten dollars
to a family of four.
I remember that

cloudy morning, clothes
strewn on the driveway
junk across the lawn.
It was a Sunday.

Under a spell
of a man who raged,
she said it would
be better if it weren't

in the house,

*You know I don't know
how to do that anymore.*

Like poems,
objects can't cry
when they are lost

but songs can keep
you up all night

even in a town
far away.

Mother, let me
play you one.

Every Suburbia has This Stain

Made of pure depth from elongated days
coming and going. Outer rim of smoke rings and lungs.
A cough

heard coming down the hall
soft and darker at its core
like a crow's wing whose bright flight
slightly lifts an evening.

Years pass with their bad news
and heatwaves. People die
or disappear down some obscure hallway
whose extension we can't explain

except to say we've submitted
to a reality happening
without our permission. And time is
empty and untenable as we watch
our youth, the corrosion of our beauty
congruent and elliptical.

How do we register this entropy?
Iridescent neutralizer of acidic cruelty

a calm approach
to the heated friction of the zone.

Lubricating the tension

a strained cadence humorous in its rainbow movement
silk-like and transitory skimming the surface.
The wet nature of

deep black galaxies.

Time is marked in drips

each one a memory leaking out.

Think of the stains as a record

marking the inevitable.

No one ever cleans up

what they've left behind.

& The Neighborhood Watched

a short film

A small house sits at the end of a quiet street.
Close in on a kitchen where a man and woman eat dinner
talking lively between pockets of laughter.
A boy is playing with cars and superheroes in his room.
A dog sleeps on the porch. The peace that is felt
has a threatening quality and may change at any moment.
Suddenly, a spill, beer runs over the table hitting the floor.
The man shouts a GODDAMMIT so loud
the boy crashes two cars together, freezes.
The woman can be heard now with an I'm so sorry
this house has heard before. A glass breaks.
A plate breaks. A chair is thrown. A body hits a wall.
There is crying. The man's shouting escalates.
The boy runs and picks up the telephone, heavy in his hand.

Jump cut: across town a woman and her co-workers on the late shift
who've just finished their lunch from that new place
down the street. On her desk sit a few greeting cards
and a framed picture of two boys at a swimming pool.
The phone rings as buttons light up and with her
delicate finger decorated with a ring she clicks a few then answers.
She can be heard telling the boy to hang on and she is sending
someone right over.

Birds eye view of a police car
driving down a street. Cut to the boy clutching the receiver
to his ear with both hands underneath a bed.
A crescendo of screams now fills the house. The male body fills the room.

The female body is whimpering and lowered.
Audio of the dog barking outside. A porch light's gold glow
is cast scraping across the exterior. A neighbor comes outside to see what the hell
is going on as the red and blue lights color the neighborhood.
From his hiding place the boy hears voices coming from a radio:
codes, inaudible squawking, other business. The men outside knock
on the door. The man inside answers. A conversation
is had. The boy hangs up the telephone. The mother
is still crying. The boy hears all the men laughing.
The dog has stopped barking. Sound of a faucet
from a bathroom. The boy hears the woman calling his name.
She asks him to go get her ice. She calls him sweetie
when she does it. The boy cracks an ice tray
places several cubes in a bag. The door to the house
closes. The men chuckle to the car. The man walks through
the kitchen out to the back porch and lights a cigarette.
The dog keeps his distance. The boy brings ice to the woman.
He sits and stares at her face. The woman tells the boy
that her and the man were only playing. The boy
goes back into his room. The police car drives
down the street. The people on their porches
watch as it goes by then head back inside.
The boy tries to go to sleep. The sound from radios
permeate his dreams. Close in on the superheroes who lay face down
in a pile. The lit cigarette thrown from the man slowly fades down.
The screen goes black. This will happen again. All the key players
stay the same. Did I tell you the men left laughing?

Ricochet

Now his truck's gone there's space in the drive
basketball hoop tattered in still night air.

I'm frozen in my young body picking up pieces
of a wreck. I examine the crater in me.

Between screams, mom shoves his plates
in my hands—pain rippling into the lush backyard.

Beyond the blue-black hills, is a river in motion—
the river that hears this house. Mom throws them

one by one into the air. I've never seen this power—
how far they go, then explode. She makes me practice

rage, but my limp wrist can't handle the weight.
White plates like the white moon watch me break.

All night the river cries porcelain. You would think
when the birds scattered, their home destroyed,

that they thought I was a man.

The next day there is nothing

to eat and nothing left to put it on.

Crushing It

Like a bee to a flower your small hands barely hold a can of that sweet sugary soda you love so much as it coats your belly bloating and slowly filling up from each sip and you hardly catch your breath and you watch as your mother drinks to chase down those little pills of many colors, morning, noon and night and when you go to watch the television the empty space on the wall, a caramel-colored frame reminds you it is currently at the pawn shop in its purgatorial state because you can do that, you can take something there and they pay you and they keep it and if you pay them before a certain date they let you buy it back before putting it out on the floor—so you need to do something to get that heavy tee-vee back because you need it and the fantasy that lives inside it and when you were helping to put it in the trunk the neighbors saw and you overheard them tell your mother that at the crush ‘n cash, a whole bag gets you five-dollars, maybe more than that if you can really fill them good and you heard them laugh as they suggest she put you in a bag too and then a pffft of a can opening.

And so day by day you start collecting them and you start stomping with your little legs like a giant attacking the city like how you see in the cartoons and everyone starts to laugh and you feel the sadness go down and the price is paid for your performance and this is your little job and when Sunday comes you fill the black bags and you take a bunch of coins that you've been saving and you push them into the cans wide mouth because more weight means more money your little mind thinks and you lift them into the trunk and the back seat of the car and one on your lap like boulders bigger than your body and they are leaking everywhere

and on a half tank you and your mother drive the miles and then pull up to a dirty concrete yard and you smell the heavy stench of cola beer and piss as a man counts the bags and then tells you to pour them into a dumpster and you rip them open and you read a sign that says green glass bottles get the better payout and you think moving forward you will ask for glass at the grocery store but you know your mother will say no, because we we can't afford that and you watch the men sort the bags and hear the loud banging of the machines and you pray it's enough for what you need as you watch cans go up the conveyor, like a rollercoaster as they are gulped into the machine and flattened before they disappear and you watch the green numbers on the tiny screen increase and you know the cash they give you won't even touch the bank account in red as your mom says *This is what we have to do honey this is how we watch our shows* and you understand now this is a team effort—she drinks you crush and you are loved for the value of what you can carry and this is how you learn—this is the weight of things

Super K

The sterile lighting makes my skin itch.

Fat babies reach desperately for color.

People are hungry for the next big deal.

I know the song coming from the overhead speakers.

I wanna know what love is. I want you to show me.

My mother sneaks a pill buried in her purse, white, oblong.

Gently puts it in her mouth and wipes away a secret.

Look at the way time slows for her.

She walks down the aisle like syrup—smiles at the shoppers,

And nearly misses a cart. She pours her wallet out onto the counter.

Hands shaking as she slides the bills one by one, coins fall anointing

her shoes. I wonder if that was her first of the day

And what kind of son I am, not counting.

Refrigerator, 1993

after Thomas Lux

Not white gleaming

like a castle

Not white like new teeth

absent of stain. More like ochre

avocado, a color of food

not to be found there. Dark

grain wood framing the edges

like on a station wagon.

Inside, the color of cheap vanilla

ice cream that sometimes

on a good week, stayed there

ready for an occasion.

Diet Coke Caffeine Free

cans off to the left, one capped

with foil and a rubber band

to save for later. No fresh

produce. No juice. No meats, cheeses

and no, not anything you'd want.

Empty drawers, empty of potential.

Yet on the top shelf sitting

on a throne as if holding court

a small clear jar

with a gold top sat laughing

at our hunger. Off-white

cream shield for aging fine lines.

Every night my mother
taught by the commercials
would twist the lid delicately
with a nailed hand
one dot then two
dabbed under each eye.
One can't look away at what
poverty does to a face
or a family walking the aisles
pretending to have a choice.
One night and many after
I took that cream
soft under my tongue
wanted to know the taste
of beauty, its secrets
to a good life
wanted to be *clean and clear*
and under control.
What I found at the end
was a price with no name.

little fury

VCR blinking midnight in this dark living room.
Ice melts, tinkling in my mother's whiskey glass
summer air, tight as a pin. She clutches her keys
quietly, thinks I'm asleep, steps lightly
towards the door then the latch.

In the absence of god, some choose to leave over love
knowing the liquor store closes in ten minutes.
The muffled engine of her Buick wakes me up
and I watch through the hazy window
red eyes of taillights sail into black expanse.
Smoke from a final cigarette lingers like a bell.

There I go, running
out the door, swung wide
to the wild field out back, dark ink of nothing
out past the tree I touch every day,
feeling my way towards the tides of grass, run
through that one tight hole in the fence,
I run, I run and I run. My little fury pulsing
through my body, running to the angry dog
chained to the post, chain thrashed with rust,
rust eating through the links. Both of us
motherless. Both of us barking
at the same thing: the irony of the leash
pulling us back.

Nocturne

The parking lot had grown into a field,
a space for dead and new things. A red truck

parked in the last space before the turn.
Brake lights signaled subtitles in the dark.

I brought my empty valley,
trampled grasses around the lake

of my deficit. I brought my body with a fee. I needed
to escape the conditions of my life:

living filled loss looking
for someone to blame.

Orange blossoms with their faint stink
lured me deeper down the path.

In a fat bowl of silence, time stretched
itself into the night. I thought I heard people laughing

in the distance. I thought I heard what sounded like a dove
playing its flute. Striking a match, he said his little world stays

the same. The engine continued idling and softly
I swallowed him, then took the twenty from his fingers

as smoke escaped his nostrils. I left that place nameless, reeking of fire.
All night, I tried scrubbing the gas station cologne

from my lips. All night, I dreamt of what I would buy:
something shiny, something warm.

Ivan

we drank one night in secret
buried the bottle we found carefully
under a junk pile threw tarp over it
showed our genders then rejected
what fascinated us I couldn't stop coughing
your laugh cracked me open
 made the dark less rogue
in the back seat of the car your dad
put on cinder blocks we pretended it moved
crouching among the webs you covered my mouth
screen door slamming on hinges *stop*
when our moms came home after a meeting filled with god
we took the devil in through the back
when they stopped looking for us
the scent from your hand told me what I was

The Minutes Add Up

Outside, the June breeze and wind chimes
swing their lullaby into the dark summer
of my bedroom. I dial a number I find
in the back of *Rolling Stone*, fall deep into the pool
of messages. Because I am no one,
I am anyone. Dear stranger, *I'm Kelly*,
and who are you? Together we travel
past our broken destinies. I decide you are tall,
masculine, with kind eyes that make the deer bow.
You have large hands and come from the field
sweat-stained and thirsty. I am perky, coy,
playing with my long hair as you easily lift me
onto your flatbed. You are here and not here. Your rough voice
sewing up the shape of my room. In Arkansas,
the nightjars are calling out, flying their predictable pattern.
You smell of grasslands and gasoline.
I describe California, the palms and their heavy sway.
The ocean's sound lapping against the shore. The bright
sun tanning my tight skin. You pull up my skirt under the stars
and push your weight into me. You praise what I do for you
and tell me what I came to hear. You are breathing
into my bent neck under all that sky when the line goes dead.
A car alarm in the distance. I'm soft now. Light coming
from the cracked door. My mother wanders
down the hall coughing with a cigarette.
When the bill comes, a balance too big for this house

already sinking, she screams: *who will pay for this?*
I already have paid for it,
living in this place, this town, this body.
Every neglected boy wants to be in someone's arms.
Tomorrow night, you're Tim. Every phone call
a record of want. Tomorrow night, I'm Jenna.
We save paradise for ourselves.
We don't care about the people left behind
attending funerals for the hours they kill.

II

“Anytime one tries to take fragments of one's personal mythology and make them understandable to the whole world, one reaches back to the past. It must be dreamed again.”

— Assotto Saint

What If I Had Told You

I heard celebration I heard love making
violence pandemonium I wanted what they had
but my luminous body hijacked by a virus
clamored in my cells Governed by ruin
my blood ran away from the plot of my life
I drove all night believing I could get it back
this body that won't be cured Sealed kisses
in the distance Desert sky stretched
into the new year Part of me died
in the soft pink delusion of clinking glasses
People of industry exiled from beauty and state
Someone said it's getting real and it did this life
of empty gestures would never be the same

[Crook of My Elbow, Cotton-Balled, Band-aid Covering, Out the Car Window]

Crook of my elbow, cotton-balled, band-aid covering,
out the car window, dangles in public smelling of
clinic, no need for sleeves. Sun surfacing the edge. I
let them see I've been drained. My blood taken and after,
a dream state. Someone inspects my red velvety syn-
tax, rushing platelets, blue under all that light. My
astronomy fluctuates past centuries, wide lenses
ready to destroy a lonely lab. The thief
I let draw seven vials has a pretty life. By tonight,
no evidence of a hurtful mark a slow waking up and into,
organized by focal points. My virus stays
low-key, volcanic. Salivating, they call for more.
I won't let them have it.

Eternity by Calvin Klein

Year end totals the smell to sex ratio selling at high rates. Florals atop earthy bottoms.
The camera flashes fast and blurry the black and white
of gleaming musculature. Money poured into the machine. Makers of beauty
magazines. Pages reeking of hormones. Musky notes apprehend the last gasp of their silent work.
Then everything stopped.

The sick and slickness closing the aperture.
Annihilation doesn't sell.

No modeling. No dancing. No skin to skin. No assistants
to light or to wet it down. At the height of crisis the kick in the door is
the white straight family model grinning proudly full teeth flawless.
Stakeholders want them strolling down the beach alive with pleasure.
The scent of death crushed by carnation

lily

marigold.

Bodies in beds form a shape. Roses from the root close the lids. A pose on film is forever.

What they thought was forgettable haunts. A crisp white bulb of fragrance

brushing the medicinal rank of hospital green.

Heads bent back laughing at a blown kiss. Unknown names caught in the undertow. Extracted glamor

buried for eternity.

Non-finito

Unfinished Painting, 1989. Acrylic on canvas (1000 x 1009)

“but I find it hard to believe that this is an actual unfinished painting. Who paints like that?”

-Reddit user 5575

At the exhibit I step lightly toward the purple pink and white
edges frayed where the brush made contact lifted back and then a kind of blank
his knowing he wouldn't complete it gives the structure of the work it's formal weight
everything political in the country that kills
I tell my friend: *I can't stop thinking about bros first they laugh then they copy*
the nature of these drawings energetic and undulating white signature sperm messy applications
feel easy at first driven by a vehicle of lust disease dripping in the body this stillness both of us share
I think is grief
For Haring, abstraction is just another "masculine" pattern it's not cosmic
every artist needs time the larger space at the end
I would love to be 50 years old Haring once said get the paint on and get going
the body begins to waste its paint leaking complicated and incomplete
the work is left behind on tote bags
a keychain yogurt cups jackets a skateboard some boy rides
marking the canvas of the city not knowing its maker said
art is for everybody but at what cost is often my question

I Could Live Forever in This Drift

cento after David Wojnarowicz

see the quiet outline easing into the distance

teeth of red factories, small sparks of airplanes
flooded gutters in that late blue and yellow

splashes of red and green neon
sliding across the wet pavements

luminous white ships plowed through
the waters of the river

orange interior walls illuminated by the metallic
blue of a video monitor

an overly sensitive microphone

split rail fencing preventing us from crawling
soon all this will be picturesque ruins

motorcycle continuing the downward arc
then the still camera: portraits of his amazing feet,

his head, that one open eye
some passive self into a lifetime

of psychic control causes my breathing
to resume, and the dream shifts

the room is filled with AIDS

then slides into a view of darkness
dismissal is policy in America

I see myself seeing death
I scratch my head at the hysteria

the whole world is still turning, and somewhere it is raining
all I can feel is the need to release

ten pounds of pressure ten pounds of rage

the huge ticking mass of it
time is now compressed

maybe it's what we call sadness
maybe it's darker than that

III

I wish to be unhinged of all systems.
-Cynthia Cruz

A New Deal

All morning across the alley
the metal dumpster clangs.
No sleep or restoration
a dream so comical I don't even
decipher its message.
Another Monday with panic.
Black candles burned all night.
I look for touch
that will turn off my mind.
Last night sirens composed a song
while the city drank.
A year of no jobs
and chest-heavy illness
jazz as medicine.
Refusal to take stimulants.
A nervous skeleton my body wears.
All these parties with fake laughter.
Everyone lit while I lose my light.
We need queer utopias
everyone at home in themselves, I say
as two queens jaywalk
across Broadway.
Everything is about the market
another new building
up in six months, left empty.
I want to love like never before.

of all that dark

My own voice echoing

high-pitched

through the valley

I didn't feel scared

I remember now

it's true

Self Portrait as Charon the Psychopomp

When you died silently in bed

Who placed the coins over your eyes

Who cried and who watched

Who will cover the cost

In the cold black water

I row my boat back and forth

They come to me

Wandering

Wailing

Bodies

Tipping the day on its side

Their anguish

Snuffed for a price

Someone told me
The white light people see
At the nexus of life and death
Is due
To lack of oxygen
Not some spiritual
Experience
It's not pitiful work
Is what I tell myself
As the slippage of hope
Attends to the ones
Who cannot pay
Some might say
I volunteered
As if I get some

Perverse

Pleasure

From all this

The easiest days

Come with cash

The hardest ones

Come with a price

A poor soul

Wearing an empty gaze

Lost on the shore

The truth is it will happen

Silently in a dream

One realm into the next

I will die with my debts

And work them off

A taxi for the dead

Sailing this river

Coins turning in my mouth

None of them mine

What is the currency

Of your love?

The Only Profile in Johnson, Vermont

A cold crust hardens over mud lust and ice touching him and carefully
the road bends into new sweetness I start to get a little experimental
I cup his bulge like a hand grenade

Sun fires over blue hills alive and wide his favorite cassette stirs the one good speaker
we park by a field a branch catches his pocketed blade near and dear
my fingers find his waistband his soft bush nest of care and cock

swelling in my classless hand then yellowing the snow
in silence *look over there* he says ice falling away
in big bright chunks

Ice falling away in big bright chunks syrup scenting the air awkward silence
absent of birdsong behind my sternum
clouds in the distance supplicate the afternoon they float in the sky of my youth

the drums kick in as the Pontiac revs minor chords to major no home for my hand
we drive the road back to the forest meridian of pleasure zoning out I say
I could live here sometimes I lie to men I will never see again

WHAT WE THOUGHT WAS THE SOUND OF HEAVEN WAS ONLY JUST THE COINSTAR

we knew what we looked like our tattered denim hems running from poverty
finished prayers we carried from the car. buckets full and heavy jars with tokens thrown in for the weight

green dreams made from pennies on the floor. from what we could scavenge mine held the least.
blending in with buyers we went to our source bright white working machine of glory.

we were not the mother and son you stare at. dumping our surplus into the mouth of a god
like you we were good here blessings to the highest spender in the supermarket. blessed just like you

everything was ours and no one was afraid dark light clean coins bouncing toward the throne
even the dog got a bone. even our sins taken away. cart full of luxury no questions asked

we redeemed we spent we ate

Thomas, We're Coming

In Cabazon,
slatted trailers sit raised
on wooden beds.

A single light hangs
over the intersection
of a dirt road.

No posts marked
with the numbers
you gave us

no phone service
while looking
for your car.

The daylight
devours us,
coyotes wake up

looking for meat.
You came here
to let a stranger

press himself
against you,

wind rushes through

the canyon and passes
hands, the cash wasn't enough
and there you went, running.

Where is your flare?

The air smells like
stolen money.
The reckless pursuit
continues
we won't find
what we're chasing.

I say your name
to the land, just in case
he didn't

homesick
howling
at the edge.

He Says He Wants to Split Me

All day I've longed
to see a tree

and there are none

Concrete columns
jutting out past

the transom
of a building's ego

In the fossilization
of memory and construction

the city lost its money
obvious where one
style ends

Looking at the grid
my complacency

governed by doom
I meet this stranger

he wants to throw
my body around

a decorated room

I want softness
the bright touch
of a leaf's lapping edge

In the end
there are no feelings

he just keeps telling
me what to do

Despite how well
I behave

after this
I won't
recognize my life

nothing

not even worship
will fulfill him

Had We Been Daisies

We would have slept on the side of a road
as cars drive by with our dreams

*No dear, someone will say
let's not pluck them.*

This country is killing us, flat open structure.
Florets arranged for complex annihilation.

None of us know where are mother is and you can see
that in the way our eyes navigate.

Every time we loan our lighters we fall in love
we hot box this hallelujah.

We live past sunsets, swollen pink filaments.
We beg you: pin us to your winter jacket. Notice us in the night.

Chill. *Let's leave them resting,* another might say.

Creeping rhizomes so hard to eradicate
invasive but beautiful they are soon forgiven. And our boys?

Our boys are roofie-eyed, open-mouthed sex machines
tongue-tilted disasters spinning plates on their sticks.

Lost in the squeeze of heat stumbling their way from doorsteps
to bedside bouquets. Final breaths withering in sun-lit kitchens.

Everyone is beautiful, searching for the right fuck
a body to lose their fear in, bright celestial cages.

When we plant all the names taken from us
you will hear them. Every tree shaking

in this american air.

What we are: a mother and child moving as a unit. Clinging to things, knuckles frayed boxes.

we find

unknown

grief sinks its fangs deep into

statements paystubs receipts

close the door

shut the blinds

nothing to see no one to see it

"Get rid of this mess so you can soak up the moments"

the edges

old bills petrified the calls never stop

see also: madness

nameless ghost crying

what we wanted was elegance

broken guitar in C-minor

No Matter

Where We Live

you can't

take it

with you

that

Our congested syntax screaming into a mirror

There Is Always

what is a life if not made up of papers

no one comes

works

see also: inventory of vagueness

This

sorrow is given a space to roam freely

Room

this is always the last place

to visit

until

see also: unknown

seperation

Bank of America

to save us

it doesnt

fragrant dried flowers lost loves

my newborn clothes-gendered, blue & pungent

one night there will be a dinner so opulent these plates rimmed with gold will make an appearance

time proves us wrong

BURSTING

the first time my mother went to the hospital she came back with new hair

two animals scrounging for scraps which they think are a feast

my newborn clothes-gendered, blue & pungent

one night there will be a dinner so opulent these plates rimmed with gold will make an appearance

the "new area" closest to the door most vulnerable to attack

free gifts from the cosmetic counters

containers for history

dear , here is a pile of forgotten letters everything eventually evaporates

often the objectivity becomes the subjectivity physical to feelings

one could spend eternity in here

postcards pictures

promises

see also: slippages

fossils of regret

I'll talk sadness, sure,

But not about my mother
smoking alone
with the lights off.
Those orange embers
opening at the end.
So here is a pile
of lotto scratchers
silver dusted tabletops
prayers of paper emptied
of promise. Here is the blue T.V.
singing me to sleep.
A late-night audience
whistling at a star.
Here the empty bottles
kept for their return value.
A gold wristwatch.
Here is a drawer full of jewels.
An unkempt field rotting
into itself. A man's tie.
A phone off the hook.
Dog wanting to be let in.
Sliver of light, distant,
through an open window.
And my precious laughter,
stolen from my belly.

THE YEAR WE ALL DID RITUALS

I'm sexiest when lonely & wondering what the world is doing
I call random numbers in my phone to see if I'm memorable
Time does its thing & splits in half
Cash is being dispensed collectively
If this is just between us, I owe my friends a lot of money
My love language is that I remember everything you say
The ways you like to nourish using every supple color
Those details show up randomly in the environment pink for example
Because I LOVE YOU for free & my moon is full
Everywhere I go I leave a window open
A body filled with knowledge is a thing you keep around
I always leave something behind so that I must come back
I can handle the loss, the heavy weight of its absence
I make the mistake of conflating my hypervigilance as being open-hearted
It feels as though I'm having surgery wide awake, aware & you are watching
I am in awe of the capacity we have to inflict violence on others
A photograph tells a thousand stories if you look at it long enough
People like to take my picture, I let them & then burn candles
If you ever find one of me, know that in my naked despair, I was having a good time
As a season, I'd be Spring: SEX, DEATH, RENEWAL
If a bird is singing as you read this, I hope you know its name

I play music for everyone I love; it is a sacred gesture
This poem will end with instructions that may or may not open you
Call three friends you haven't spoken to in a while & tell them they are on your mind
Be open to what comes back to you, beautiful green energy
This is a medicine that should not be taken for granted
Lie languid on your bed & send a portrait of you in the nude
Blessed be the body and the song you are today
Your lover is coming & we are not at war

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