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No, Dear

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ERROR

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No, Dear
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PROUD MEMBER
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the mouth ends
 in measurable space: recital of trees and black rooms where thingness
 gathering, communication happens outside the body
 rights itself

[clmp]

Or: Saying Goodbye to the Second-to-Last Gay Club on Earth on the Eve of its Closure
 from Deep Within the Belly of an Accidental K-hole

sorry i'm sorry you're pretty and i'm very snow
 in my stomach do sliver a surge and need to will
 threw down now right now which way was is? is
 was or was falling soft snow would be so beautiful
 if i were here if we? if street were we if keys
 were here if i was a better key sorry she's not picking
 down picking sleep sorry there's sleep falling
 gently on your hair it's so yes your home couch
 is the club was home? is the floor
 a girl? face fall worry like you barely know my
 key and carry me because because? air
 was once and light was once oh day i'm am
 upside her where maybe if home is we touch
 light below floor where an us? could reach
 easy lean me to world on the floor spilled
 world god i'm was very worlded and sorry
 never been this much a couch is sleep a naval
 light? was coat is lost? in sea is ground above
 pool of found wet am spin cycled spilt am wet
 sorriness — no don't too sorry don't soil snow
 with so sorries make you sow keyless sorries under
 bald ing sun with floor of the day above and falling
 now soft gift couch what was now? you toilet
 you blanket i'm couch ends that are not club are
 worlding you? you a yes me i'm am too old
 to be so young but had key to young once swear sorry
 nosorry had key to we had love as if love was is? iswas
 a club dayless gay always lights a closing world
 always the last but never as if day is inderneath
 in you you upright night blanket sorry i'm such
 closure is sun soils a club and i'm am laid each our
 loves to rest unhere where world disworlded where
 us once and will same sun sowing me old
 and slept in restless want that sorries your key
 to sleep but wakes us new suns spilt to lost
 gift of dayless day to keyless wet unending

I Saw Separation

I showered	for hours
let my	self split
drip down	the drain
length of a wet breath	outside the strange body
like catching	reflection
of a face in	a train window
forgetting	it is mine
I walked	four more
blocks light stalked	my shadow
attacking from	angles left right
splitting it into two	three four until I am
surrounded by the self	divided the parts of
me that require	no light for structure
my shadows walk with me	meld back to one then none

ON DIASPORA // MY MOTHER

our blistery connection,
 a love like the severed
 telephone cord, i'm waiting
 for the writing
 of barbed wire flaying
 skin,
 open. you
 called me your daughter
 as if it were a forgotten question, mark -
 a beleaguered separation,
 a missed understanding
 the way
 our conversations blur into abyssal
 pain - the leftover sentences
 caught
 in the surge of just trying
 to find, a way
 to live with the wound/s dear s
 you refuse
 to speak.

to:

Ritual

On the second-to-last day of his life
 I sat in hospice and made my dad—
 a sparkle of a man, booming, rad
 who wore torn shorts and baseball
 tees & soaked it all in, now shrunken
 with closed eyes & rattling—a last
 iced tea with lime, nearly shouted
 at him that I was doing so, so he'd
 snap to attention. There was a small
 stick with a sponge at the end and I
 dipped it in the styrofoam cup and then
 into his mouth, he came back to life and
 sucked wildly, his face said *Aahh*
 like he did on so many hot Virginia
 afternoons or maybe *shit, that's good*
 and then I made sure no one was
 looking and ate the sponge whole

Recoil

Hair like cotton
 candy, it rebels against your
 grandmother's hot comb, father's
 baseball cap, society's standards of beauty.

Classmates make fun of how
 it grows up and out
 like the branches of a tree,
 disobeying the laws of gravity.

Still, you can't help but marvel
 at the way each tendril twists and turns,
 spiraling upwards in thick
 clusters of celestial curls.

In awe of how each strand stretches,
 then springs back like a slinky,
 or the cord of the landline
 in your mother's kitchen.

Splendidly coiled,
 uncontained,
 it demands to be free.
 Let it be.

WHEN SUN FELL

Always my grandmother's belt
her rage swift and painful

she'd throw a rock or shoe or book
if she called and you didn't come

my mother's glitter arms
her fish body slicing water

once I fell asleep on her back
in a river that glowed and grew sweet lemons

her orchid wreath of wet locks
glowing when sun fell over us

and if I say *father*
how can I unload that father son wishbone

ghost or back of my arm drunk willful womanizing
what we lost that year

after begging for days my father offered
five dollars for my week at summer camp

I was happy
had been for a long time

until he said
tell your mother I'm no money tree

his fist a small prickly pomerac seed in my throat
a husky chimney hanging from his mouth

here is your father selling all your secrets
here is your father facing you down like a woman

ten and staring down shame
could not look at cousin Avi standing next to me

then the crude boat of my lips opened
tripping the skeletal frame of my teeth

and me neck thrown back hollering from my big Ochun mouth
fuck you into the red traffic of my island.

straight men talk to me in bars

and I become suddenly a chortling marm, *aren't you just a little charmer, what do you do for a living*, like I'm three seconds from ruffling your hair, doing some unsolicited husband-shopping for a faraway cousin's daughter: the auntie at the party you never minded so much, the octogenarian administrative assistant you're secretly flattered watches your ass when you leave, maybe if I'm kind and warm and loveable, you won't kill me for not smiling right, and I'll remind you of someone else whose job it is was ruffle your hair, produce mundane unearned praise and cheesecake, squint with benevolence for each bite you take: *that sounds hard*, I'll say, to almost anything, so ready to open a false heart to remind you I'm alive, only then, sometimes, if I'm particularly lucky or drunk, I'll pull an old memory from behind your ear think, *ah, there you are*, but by then we've already done it.

where do we go when this might be the most romantic it ever gets
me, your good sport grandma with cookies, still ticking,
you, delivering updates at my hospital bed where I have kept myself alive
against you and everyone else, the odds of that.

FLOWERS ARE NOT PRAGMATIC LIKE NUMBERS

I did a botched trust fall with this chick and now I'm stuck like, is anyone awake at 1:30 PST? Steph tells me there are 19,000 different species of sunflower. Yeah, I'm in the sunshine state again. Came here 2 times in 2 months to visit this girl. I sip my jasmine tea at the dim sum bakery while we analyze her birth chart. This time it's like my premonition except I stopped wanting dissolution and started wanting off.

I firmly believe in my unique jasmine. I firmly believe in giving it 5 days and a rolled up dollar bill. I steal 2 flower essences and some collagen supplements from the health food store. I note the 49 people who've watched my story while the smell of incense and vape binds to my moral fiber. I remember a friend once telling me - narcissus is just a fancy name for a daffodil, anyhow.

fashion is newness, in clothes we replicate the angels and insects both, i emerge butterfly-like, i male the camouflage i like the beast, i build my reckoning, my womam coaf fitcing, smug, sljnnjng, elegamf, mew.

Big Data

Someone tells me it's our basic information boiled down to numbers.
 I lose track of the numbers I become. The iron gate circles the track,
 the track circles the football field. I'm running so slow between the lines
 painted on the tarmac, that from above I must look as still
 as the football field I orbit. To see myself from above would be
 to leave my body, become invisible, rising, so much like air I'd be
 everywhere. I lose track of the shape numbers take
 in their becoming a thing in the world:

An advertisement. A salary. A bomb. To become a thing
 in the world is to be born out of a body. Where then, are we leaking.

the letting go

the future is shedding a wolf's face and wondering if that will satisfy our grudges.
 my gems don't find light in dark expanses, and for that i can trust them.

how, asks the jackhammer, do i always abandon the body as it enters the soul?

when the problems are in plain sight on bare armchairs, take from them a whole apple and
 see how slowly they hide their mossy backs.

if we act on the center of what we have to offer, we will never have enough.

my enemy lived off so little love / they tried to excavate my birth place.

i'm not sorry for disproving to you that hate branches out from sensibility.
 everything is more exhilarating than a knife-tip hovering your brain when you're rot-full
 of iron.

you are the opposite of receiving.
 the people in space are dictating a novel on discord but they can't seem to listen
 at different times.

a long time ago, i didn't understand taste as another form of being born.
 don't let me be alone with my losses.

my mouth is dirty.
 that's not reason enough to be contained.

UNNERVED

You are unnerved
 Among the nervous
 That's flamboyantly annoying
 Swing your authority like a yoyo
 Bounce your nightstick like a pogo
 Break open the pinata
 The insides of a boy
 from my alma mater
 Red liquids
 Not a kool aid for his daughter
 His
 Medulla Oblangata
 Sacrifice the holy
 Drink up all the water
 Redistribute the pipes
 So now there's lead up in my agua
 Come to my town
 And get scared of the iguanas
 And the lizards
 But not the snakes
 How can you be scared,
 when you look you in the face?
 Huh, Jake?
 Huh, flake?
 You fucking corny
 You be frosted
 Force to force it
 Call a team of murderers a force
 But what the cost is?
 I'm talkin bout
 the overseers
 the officers, who have to stay in office
 Administrative duty
 for the copper of the plea
 who lost it
 When he begged thee
 To step off like two or three
 Not talkin bout the ones
 that be out there
 tryna save the world
 I know no one is perfect

So stop killing boys and girls
 It has a ricochet effect
 Look at the mass shootings
 The whole country sees you do it
 And look who gets influenced
 look who get influenced
 See I been getting to it
 I'm just tryna influence
 creators to create
 Inspire the BeBe's to debate
 But look at the mass shootings
 The whole country see you do it

And look who get influenced

Poem indebted to Edmond Jabès

Dear whatever,
 moaning behind my ink,
 can you guess how grateful
 I am, to be sick and cold in bed?
 As far as I can ever know
 the sun won't rise without me.

I am reading the book backwards.

Is the I of this page
 as whole a woman as I? As kissed small by love?
 I didn't know how to be humble,
 and still don't, but I have an ear to listen with.

I am so unsure, so often.

I turn to questions, questions,
 and questions turn to questions.

Then a sweetness
 is the air, in sweetness

turning blue, sweetness reminded.

There is so much harm

I can refrain from.

I can live below the surface of myself instead.

There is still

some blank space

and still the empty margin.

God of fog, and gift of absent speech:

Forgive me. I am one word closer.

friction

exception of every
 moment practice in
 motion leader torn
 off as a joke framed
 in a picture practical
 in less moment practice
 is a joke leader in
 exception joke is
 less motion

later I was walking
 after interrupting
 sight leafing
 through debris
 turning and
 pulling to open
 walking I was sight
 later through after
 debris open to
 pulling turning
 interrupting and
 leafing after was
 sight I open through
 later I open through
 after

see in the doorway
 washing the floors
 a way in proper
 strokes to pass
 the notes hearing
 something further
 the doorway a way
 the floors see
 washing in the
 proper pass see to
 the strokes pass
 the proper way

the work slits the
 cause the parts
 confound the whole
 stiff process

wringing the stiff
slits the work
parts the process
the work slits
the cause the
whole confound
the wringing the

pasture full in
the green brakes
locked in rust
more time has
past than present
more brakes than
green the locked
present has more
than brakes time
past in the green
the pasture locked

The Migrating Horses
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The Migrating Horses

-for Aracelis Girmay

Impossible to know, I think,
where the hand wanders
through migratory light.

I've seen the facets of small,
possible things, their dark
sound and fresh paint.

I'm ever curious of how the horses
drape a body of green rain, all of her
hidden, intangible flowers.

Curious of what shoulders
hold in the spring and again
in winter. Curious of the germ

plucked out of air and split
open all blood orange.
I have not learned

like I have with my elbow,
my feeblest tooth,
my pilonidal cyst.

There is no real reward at the end
of a book aside from the thought
that something new is missing.

Dear each, the horses made it
to the garden, happy,
drunk on plums.

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