Izzy Srivastava

Submission 2

The curtain’s drawing to a close

And everyone’s obsessed with hanging onto the things they have spent a year whining about

With clinging, just a little longer, to the devil they know

And warding off the devil they don’t

Or maybe it’s just

Me

I’m flying over pools of darkness in a city that looks like Christmas lights draped across the Earth

They can’t all be water, can they?

What did I do this year?

What changed this year?

Did I change this year?

How much of it can I relive, if I try?

How much of it can I get down, permanent, if I try?

And now we’re soaring through fog

That courses past my window

Sparkling like stardust

What do I want from next year?

What do I want to hang on to?

What do I want to forget?

Am I scared? Excited? Sad? Nostalgic? Confused? Happy?

And everything outside my window has gone dark

Except the occasional red flashes of light on the plane’s complicated metal wing

I hope those are good red flashes

What am I supposed to do?

Desperately try to do it all again, “one last time?”

Wait for the turn of the calendar with crossed fingers and bated breath?

Say hasty goodbyes, and painful goodbyes, and every kind in between?

Shed tears?

Smile in anticipation?

I think I can make out something underneath the haze of dark clouds

This vague spot of … otherness

It’s fading in the distance now

And now it’s gone

Like this year, which has spilled through my fingers

And taken an eternity

And an instant

Doing so

I want so much to be different next year

I want it to be quick, painless,

And I want it to last forever, and feel every minute of it

I want to remember so much of this year

For the rest of my life

And some tiny, scared, tired part of me wants to stay here forever

With my ghosts and regrets and longings and mistakes

With my laughter and love and accomplishments and risks and growth

Outside of the red flashes, I see nothing

Nothing but a velvet black curtain, inches from the stage’s floor

Nothing but a void

Beckoning, the menace within it a-grin

And whispering, “It’s all up to you, kid.

Endless possibilities.

All yours.”

What’s next?