

Hanna Kang
Poetry

The growing of voice

To forget

I was not meant
to come this far,
and exist like this
in your memories,
yet I spill out words
to you unbidden,
so that you can take
this small part of
myself, and be
reminded that you
are free to
forget me.

Bertha

The room is filled with
a cold scent of smoke,
and flames, and tears,
and my own heart
bared out for the ghosts;
I hold out my hands to feel a warmth
surrounding me even still.
And when I close my eyes,
I am held by the same embrace
as that long ago wedding,
when we were still bound together.

I am not in love any more.

I clung onto the loosening
of the veil around my neck with
tightly laced affection, so why
do I feel this despair
when I open my eyes and there is
only an empty room to catch me?

I am not in love anymore.
but maybe I want to be

Silence and nothing

The *Itasca* must be sending us
something, anything
nothing
the direction of Morse
code signals is unknown,
and maybe we are lost and
gone astray, perhaps
too North, or South, or Far

Calls for a bearing are broken
by static, and I ask for
guidance, and yet
nothing

as I try to keep the plane
steady in its flight, red-tipped
wings looking more and
more like blood in the
ongoing silence.

We are on the line 157 337.
We will repeat this message.
We will repeat this on 6210 kilocycles.

Wait.

Honey and sugar

Your words are like honey,
those artificial gumdrops on Christmas
like sugar-plum fairies dancing away
far into nighttime fantasies
as if they were merely dreams, just like
distant memories of childhood
reaching caramel hands into Halloween baskets
like desperate shadows,
and if they only stay behind us,
we don't have to remember them at all
which is like choosing to forget
the forged words of the once loved,
and when they try to speak, their words are

just sugar, which is sickening to behold.

Halloween ghost

There's a ghost somewhere
this Halloween night, as
pumpkins glow with eerie malice,
or maybe just with joy.

The ghost is silent behind me,
a stranger made only of dust, but
then it feels familiar in the cold.

Where is the person? Who used to
stare back in the mirror?

With hands that used to hold mine,
flesh to glass before they had to go
and join the others who wander,
lost in shadows and reflections,

merely echoes of myself.

Fractures, fallen

Broken pieces of glass,
glinting in sunlight to return

pieces of myself
back to squinting eyes,

and the glass is not colored, only
useless diamonds abandoned

on busy concrete with too many
people passing by to care

about the fractures, fallen

from someone's careless hands,

leaving behind this gritty
smear of glinting mistakes

and damaged reflections
in the form of shattered bottles

Look out to the horizon

Something to be said about eyes
that watch you from a distance
and do not break their eagle gaze
until you look up and meet the ocean
that tries to keep you bound.
Do not stare with such an open soul.

Perhaps you cannot help but have a soul
that yearns for kind eyes
instead of having yourself bound
to some insignificant bridge across the distance
of a churning ocean.
The room does not appreciate your gaze.

Instead of watching me, send your gaze
to someone else's untethered soul,
perhaps that unexplored ocean
can make those terrifying eyes
meet the ones searching from a distance.
Do you think that you should be bound?

Don't turn to me with stares that are bound
up with the sticky ties of a bird's gaze,
why don't you watch someone else, distance
stretching the room, someone with a soul
that pairs up with your distrustful eyes?
There is nothing of interest in my own ocean.

If I wanted to return an ocean,
I'd do it because I am not as bound
to your infinite parallel eyes
and your never-ending need for a gaze
that smothers me with your questioning soul.
I would think that you cared not about distance.

Maybe you're just bored, and the distance
between is close enough for the ocean
that separates us to force your soul
into something that keeps us bound
by the thread connecting our shared gaze.
At least give me a reason for your staring eyes.

Give me more than your soul at a distance.
Make your eyes have their own ocean,
and maybe then we can be bound with only a gaze.

She loved three things

She loved three things:
fantasy worlds, numbers,
and the notes of a flute

She hated to fail.
She hated unspoken words
and refusals

and I was her friend

He loves three things

He loves three things:
fresh soap, citron tea,
and gentle morning colors

He hates to lose.
He hates kimchi
and broken routines

and I am his sister

To Go to Bear Mountain

To go to Bear Mountain. In the sprawling heat
of August, sunlight sticking to skin
and filling the air with summer heaviness.
To touch emerald leaves, rocky fingertips pulling at the
frayed edges of glowing treetops. Bark
bending towards each other,
arching their greetings towards
me and offering hands to hold
whenever I stumble from the
effort of a climb that I don't
know the point of.
To breathe in the smallness below.
And hold the mountain in aching fists dusted

with boulders, not yet knowing
that I would soon forget
the weariness.
To the summit of it all.
Remember the whole world that fit
neatly in my shaking hands, remember
jagged drops, and hidden snakes,
and the kind scent of something,
a rain, or the descent. But the rain doesn't
fall; it hangs in heavy clouds,
waiting for my tired body to make its way down,
downwards, and farther and farther still,
to the start of the climb, when the sky
can finally release its held breath,
and I am safe.

December Night

An early start to the darkness
that Night forges on us,
but twinkling colors fill the air
and the shadows with radiance.

Christmas turns the neighborhood
into vanilla frosted rooftops,
and rainbows of candy sprinkled over
the gingerbread warmth longing to live.

From inside, the warmth lives free.
I stand near tall windows
marred by my handprints,

cooled to the touch and lingering on.
Blue tulip curtains blush
softly behind me with
a gentle carefulness that
reminds me to sleep.

As the homes outside glitter,
the scent of clementine peels
wafts through the yawning room,
and holds me safe in loving arms

I am not so inclined
to move on from this moment,
this memory of light
with its oncoming gloom.

Golden Shovel

With the moon long ago risen, we
sit together, my brother and I, so the real

goodbyes can happen, in this cold
house, colder than we

both anticipated when we left
the park after I picked him up from school,

and I watched him play basketball so we
could spend more time together and not lurk

inside an unheated house. It's too late

for us to watch a movie, and we

talk about a character in *The Stranger* who'd strike
his dog for a whole walk, straight

until they went back to their apartment. We
don't talk more about the book. Instead, we sing

along softly to Christmas music, before the tiredness sinks
in, and he starts to blink slowly and sleepily. We

exist now, in this transparent and thin
liminal plane of unsaid goodbyes, and he yawns again

before I nudge him and say that we
should be in bed. The soft Christmas jazz

that plays in the background reminds me of late June
nights, when we'd both be awake like this. We

don't have long now, and though it's not like I'll die,
I'll miss him tomorrow all the same. I'll see him soon.

On sleep

I wish I could hold you tight in my arms
never let you go or leave me so that
we'd be as close as we were when we
were younger and not like now
when you stay out of my reach for
so long. Come back tonight, and I'd
release my desperate hold on these
countless coffee cups for you to
take their place and fill up my veins
with silk drowsiness and softened
dreams instead of the incessant buzzing
of caffeine that was never as kind as
you once were to me

Chocolate milk river

There was no chocolate milk river
to cross in Candy Land, and the
closest that we had was
Molasses Swamp, which is
too slow to take the place of what I see
in front of me right now,

which is the overflowing river that
rumbles inches away from my
curious body, loud enough to
soften the sounds of the world
and my mind.

if I took another step forward, I would
be carried away into the endless churning
chocolate milk sea
that I would have once longed
to drink

Remember me Frog

I miss you, little frog, with speckled leaves
patterned on your plush body, except
they weren't really leaves, at all
but I miss you regardless, right now
in the night holding another whose name I
can't recall in the daytime when I hold
no one, and I don't know where you are now,
maybe left behind, in the basement and covered
in dust and next to the other abandoned comforts of
a childhood that doesn't exist, not anymore,
but I remember your smile and your sleepy
eyes filled with a warmth that I made up in
my mind, and your friends that have long been

missing, but I've forgotten the rest, I've forgotten
the details of who exactly you were, as I now forget
the details of my own day, and I can't ask you
anymore, because you only lived when I was asleep,
and now you've gone somewhere that I cannot seem
to follow, so you leave me behind but you ask me
to remember where we can meet again, where we can be
together like we were in the past, and I try to
remember where we had once been content
but I have been awake for so much longer
than I wanted to be, and I still can't clear the
fog from my tired memories and I still can't remember
and I still can't say
goodbye.