

In dreams I remember  
By Rebecca N. McKinnon

~~never~~ let go

1. (~~never~~)

There is a locked  
filing cabinet of us  
in my mind

It doesn't matter  
how much I love you  
I lost the key

That's the way moving  
on works, though I wish  
it wasn't

In the dead of my sleep  
I found it  
the key to you and me

My grip was strong  
on the little locket  
but my unsteady wrist

trembled the tiny key  
in trepidation and longing,  
twisted it

giving my mind access  
to the perfect details of your face  
to your sweet voice like a clear bell struck

and striking me I woke sweating,  
my mouth cracked open  
in silent scream

I am convinced now

that we never forget, truly  
that our brilliant bodies

do only what they must  
to protect themselves.  
Indeed, I was broken

all morning from the nightmare  
of missing you, again  
after all this time

Broken like it was 3 days ago  
not 13 years

Broken like the star-crossed girl  
I used to be

and somehow--deep inside,  
locked away, inaccessible to  
even me most of the time--

always will be.

## 2. let go

We threw the party  
at a new restaurant  
that month.

It was a corner shop,  
mom and pop,  
on the edge of nowhere.

Exit left for everything  
you've chosen/ever known.  
Exit right for something else entirely.

It was only the beginning  
and people were standing.  
No one had their food.

This should have infuriated me  
but you walked in, found me  
with only your eyes

and moved me with only the  
gesture of your finger.  
I followed and away we went

away from everyone/everything  
we thought mattered at the time  
where we could be alone

right, directly into the deserted dark,  
where you'd never go with me  
if it wasn't a dream

so I knew and I fought the illusion slipping  
I grabbed your hand  
and squeezed

I held on tighter to the loveliness  
of the lie, and suddenly  
we were masked

Reality plucked me in and out  
of consciousness and each time  
I closed my eyes tight

knowing this was a way back to you  
and probably the  
only one

You pushed me against a cold  
brick wall and I let you,  
I would've let you do anything in that place

The nose of your Zanni mask  
pushed awkwardly into  
my own covered face

the closer you came to me.  
I didn't even know what disguise  
I wore, why or for whose benefit

But I recognized yours  
and the symbolism elicited such  
grief in me

that when I woke again  
I did not close my eyes.  
I no longer wanted to see.