**Self on the First Date**

1.

You need the sun if you want to stop

fast action. The sun wins every single time.

The way it stands above you like everything

is going as planned as thought how it shines

on pregnant women on broken bikes

and bones on unplanned pregnancies. I’m

sweating underneath the same purple pleated skirt

I got hit by a car in or collided with a car in

or the sun opened its mouth blew me

to the ground in. It looks different tonight.

Some kind of photo grid meant to be read

from right to left.

2.

And I keep telling the story of being hit by a car

because I don’t know the name for not remembering

if the driver had his blinker on. I couldn’t stop

then I fell on the left side. In the street

like that one so close to where I work

a pregnant woman stops to ask if I’m okay.

The shape of her stomach from the concrete

view. A coffee mug.

3.

This is what comes to me in a dream: a huge belly

by an old dentist husband who is expecting

with his new lover. Going alone to appointments

walking around the office without a ring on.

4.

Would the accident have meant more if it were fatal?

There has to be a poem in looking this good

then dying on a bike. No helmet but a purple

pleated skirt. Sometimes at the light, my thick

thighs wear my shorts and men beep.

5.

Photography is not about moments.

The rule of thirds makes a perfect sunset.

The worst time to take a photo is in the

middle of the day. I don’t carry mace.

6.

The first thing you touch at the bar is my hair.

You unearth what you name volume. You

are named after a saint who carried a sword.

7.

The second thing you touch is my lips.

8.

I want to take a photo of you. All directives come

together. Fill the frame let the subject dominate

the image. Get as close as you possibly can.

9.

The third thing you touch is a complex area

named by Natacha in high school.

10.

You reference conflicts in the Middle East.

There’s no time for spot metering. Your eyes

are moving too fast, you’re casting all the light

even when you describe me as full of hope labeling

everything as up and coming as on the rise

as getting there. I’m ignorant to international

conflict. I started in the womb with my own.

Mostly unaware but I know trauma. Bullet wounds

in Beirut. Bullet wounds in Boston. Your sword

is in the way you stare with openness.

Men don’t share where I’m from.

11.

I feel your knuckles as if I know how a surgeon’s

knuckles should knead. I think they’re soft and

you show me every spot where they are not. I want

to lick the redness until I see a boy on the train ride home

staring out the window. His father wants to know

if there’s anything good out there. Horrible

he whispers, but he doesn’t turn his curly head.

Bio:

*Shauna Barbosa’s poems have appeared or are forthcoming in The Awl, the minnesota review, A Bad Penny Review, No Tokens Journal, Sundog Lit, PANK and some mark made. She is currently pursuing an MFA at Bennington College. You can find her at [shaunabarbosa.com](http://shaunabarbosa.com/" \t "_blank).*