

poetry

Gum

Alivia Platt

your words feel like empty Chapstick tubes and blue spearmint gum
wrappers that stain your fingers if you roll them around too long.
and while I do not regret loving you,
I regret the way your caution tape tongue did not wrap around me tight
enough to keep me from falling;
or rather that you let me fall but did not catch me;
or rather that I fell and did not catch myself.

i was a twin

Lindsay Killips

my mother parted her lips,
cried ruby elephants
into the quiet until
she had a lagoon, swimming
with their trunks and toes.

and blue belugas swam down
her cheeks when she saw
the crimson coagulated puddles.
elephants

birthed trumpets into still air.
she turned february-ivory
as if all her
red drained
from her
insides
out.

like the cheetahs who raced
up her throat past her mouth
when they heard of those
elephants

their trunks and toes littered
far from home. an ultrasound
finds only one
heart beat.

five months later my mother
parts her lips. july. births her
last ruby elephant.

dealing with depression

Jorge Diaz

churning butter takes about 15 with
an empty mason jar with a lid.
fill it up with heavy cream.
shake it for seven minutes,
make sure the seven minutes are about
whipping the cream with
itself.

when the seven minutes are up
the mason jar will now contain
whipped cream. and you must shake again,
get up and shake again
after sixty seconds you will feel a solid buttermilk
fog. get rid of it, shake it out, stick your finger inside
the butter and cream, fight against the goo.
rinse the butter, add herbs, kosher salt,
and put it in the fridge.
it'll last you two or three days.

Eventually the Sun Rises

Maggie Macgregor

i couldn't sleep last night, so i went outside
at three am, and the squirrels were
leaping from limb to limb, reckless in the dark
and chattering, too, talking about the big sky moon

full tonight
on the edge of the horizon
and heavy, a big fat bowl of milk about to drop
all its sweet whiteness
to fill our mouths and
gaping eyes staring at it

my knuckles grind into open lids and catch
an instant before they close
i scrape my eyes raw with dry hands
and quickly well tears
a burning balm's fat drops of hot salt from
plastered lashes
down to pool
on corners of cheekbone ledges

my face is wet and cold now
the wind blows
threatens to fling the squirrels
through space
mid-jump
a shiver starts in the warm spot between my shoulder blades and tingles
into tiny hairs on my neck, which prick up
a giant
pinches softly a hunk of hair from my head
and blows ice at the sensitive skin behind each ear

the squirrels settle down, now
to avoid a quick death in the night
i sit and stare
and breath small quick breaths

Grey Area

Hannah Rose Ledezma

The grey's a little heavy today, and I keep grasping for words to hand to the people I love so I can fill this obsidian silence that I keep staring into, fingers clutched around a lipstick-stained cup of cold lemon tea. If I'm being honest, it doesn't taste like yellow the way that I need it to—more like the chipping mural in a children's hospital, cheerily bright and devastatingly normal.

And truthfully, it's probably because beginnings are starting to feel like ends, caressing my cheeks. Regretful and shaking. And I can't remember the last time I could fill a room and not feel the rising panic that comes with staring into the sun. I blink through spotty vision and open up my mouth to speak, but only a few silk-soft and damaged petals fall out, mangled and mixed with shards of too-sharp seaglass. Something you thought was beautiful until you picked it up and it bit back.

And it sounds a bit like the taste of nostalgia on your tongue, or your mother stroking your hair and singing you an old Dutch lullaby, and I'm sorry. Really. Truly, I am, because I know that each tarnished love note that slips from my lips reminds you of a burnt-out street lamp, flickering over the bloody carnage of your favorite horror film.

And I know that I should be steering clear, but I guess I'm looking for the gold at the end of the rainbow, or maybe a cure for remembering.

I'm not terribly sure. It seems to have slipped my mind.

Sailing Lessons

Nicolas Wesely

Dark, with my eyes screwed in tight.
Clean drunk, spinning in place with
 an elbow cocked out an open window,
 gargling cold wind and the smell
of curbside garbage cans sailing up and up and up

into two blasts of light molding
 the momentum of stray dogs—I net
 the bellow of a freight train
 as green light surges through a
dash of black magic I catch in whistled lightning.
Never so much a stranger, as much as a guest,

fielded in the expression of empty tuna cans.

A mile more is considered a gift.
A mile less is beloved sleep.

when ophelia wanted my girl

Morgan Brantmeyer

skin the color of light coffee crinkles on her forehead
lips pressed together in a slight frown
she looks at me with melting almond eyes, and i have to blink and glance
elsewhere,
unable to stare too long,
for fear of becoming stone,
or maybe a million butterflies
bursting out of my chest and into the air in a squadron of colors

ophelia, do you understand what i'm feeling here?
do you feel the drums in the veins of my wrists?
the blood thumping to a tune in my head that rings when her name flows off
my lips
like clear river water sliding down rocks and over fallen branches
in the heart of winter?
have you felt this feeling before,
so deep that it echoes in your bones,
the way a song that sticks to you, rattles in your ribcage?

i have not felt that way for any mortal,
ophelia whispers to me
i touch her chin and lead her gaze with the push of my finger
and we watch together, quietly,
we watch the girl as the crinkles in her forehead subside and she scratches
pencil against paper,
bottom lip hooked gently on a tooth as she glares down in thought

suddenly
her pencil falls, and i've been caught staring
for the millionth time in the hour
studying the creases around her knuckles and the wisps of baby hairs
springing off her forehead,
hair pulled back in a sloppy bun
her almond eyes bore into me,
and the corners of her mouth slip up in a busy smile, cheeks brightening
with the pink hue of cherry blossoms

i shut my eyes and smile, opening my gaze back to the ghost sitting next to
me

ophelia turns and looks me up and down,
a devilish grin painted on her mouth
her fair skin hushed in the dim light

*you are right, and also a fool, she says
why a fool?*

*you can't fall in love with angels
she isn't an angel*

*you just can't see her wings
i'm already in love, i think
you wanna get drunk on her lips, i bet
wouldn't you?
of course i would.*

