

**linearity**

today my grandma cried over a document  
that confirmed the purchase of his old boat  
that we sold to someone and i realized that  
grief is not and will never be linear.  
it has been four entire years since  
he has been gone and grief still stalks and  
attacks from the shadows without a warning.  
one second she was laughing, showing  
me old papers, *this is from 1994 -  
why the heck do i still have it? it's not like i still  
audit for the local papers!*, and then  
she went silent, and when i looked up her  
face was contorted by pain and tears and  
she tried to hold it back but like always,  
it takes over for a few seconds. she cried  
onto my shoulders, and i went and cried  
in my room on my own, my tears a quiet  
betrayal to the future that i'm trying to find,  
and once our faces were dry, we both  
continued throwing away the  
old papers of the past.

**a memoir from  
forgotten reminders**

the blaring of a t.v. set too loud  
draws me from slumber as chattering  
voices from *The Today Show*  
let me know what's hot and what's  
not for the week. *that doesn't matter*,  
i think, *what matters is where that  
recliner once sat is now occupied  
another*, and there my grandmother sits,  
laughing and

an old coffee mug that has been  
filled by a k-duo keurig is now  
neglected, forgotten -  
only the single cup side has been  
used, as the pot is too big  
for a party of two. *what a waste*,  
i hum to no one while i

throw on a maroon flannel,  
fingering the rips made in the  
fabric from both him and i.  
the thermostat sits at a  
blistering 72 - a measly  
replacement for the warmth  
now gone with the body that  
had once radiated it and

an array of baseball caps  
sit in dust in the closet,  
no longer worn on a daily  
basis. smells of grease and  
oil, of lakes and playing cards  
still linger among neglected  
winter jackets. those doors  
stay shut and locked and

four years, and it still  
refuses to leave us alone

**somewhere on the mountain side**

a bull elk stands, overlooking the  
vast expanse of snow capped mountains.  
he does not know what they are  
named: his purpose is simple. he aims  
to survive a meek world. for him, life is fleeting,  
brief, a constant battle never to be won.  
an eagle screams overhead - the sky an even  
greater stretch of life; it breathes just  
as a living soul would. the elk does not  
understand this, but

    i do. i know that the canyons  
    are evidence of mythical storms,  
    that unkempt grasses feed what  
    humanity thinks as pests. that  
    the sky can be angry and joyful  
    all in an hour's life, how it houses  
    rains and storms and clouds  
    and the sun.

here, i sit, looking out the ground floor  
window that accompanies my bedroom.  
for me, existence is unrivaled; lasting. i  
have the authority to guide my life to  
where ever i wish to be for the end of time.  
i know that this vast body of water is named  
lake superior, as i know many names and places  
and purposes of things. i understand that without  
the earth and its unending simplicities,  
all would cease. i understand, and sometimes,  
    i wish i didn't.

**memories of a dream  
from a life past**

a chickadee is chirping nearby while i  
sit on the porch alone, so i reach out and offer  
it an array of bird seed when a memory surfaces: you  
and i were feeding the deer, you telling me that the  
dreams we have in the night are just a memory  
desperately trying to remind our souls of  
happier times, of laughter and love, of a  
joy that tastes like sunshine yellow.  
a dragonfly lands on a drooping rose,  
its wings steady. i'm surprised: i have not seen  
one dancing this year so late, at  
least not before the brazen sunset,  
reminding me of you. it has been many years  
since i cried childish tears before  
the sun dips below the horizon. you  
would have comforted me if you were  
here but instead, i watch dusk being born.

*\*hidden line by Jorge Luis Borges  
from Two English Poems*

**incessant ambivalence**

this question i raise: how do i let go? the cherry maple cabinets in the kitchen, the ever-changing needlepoint above the couch accompanied by decor of metal, the back deck's porch swing and it's flitting hummingbird companions are engraved into my skin, embedded into the flesh of my emotions. i want - need - to find a way to continue forward. i'm wavering in my decisions - the ghosts of a lost tooth, a broken bone, laughter of yearly family gatherings remain in my ear; shadows of a hospice bed and it's occupant gone, the yard where decades of dogs have created their own trails (here, mine now leaves paw prints over ones left by my grandfather's dalmatian, my mother's shepherd, my uncle's lab) - they all grasp at me, tie me down into a bed of memories that won't fade eternal, and the door refuses to close. the future spurns to wait for this acceptance just as i yearn to grasp at what i do not yet know the answer - how do i ever move on?

- please, i'm begging you.