

When I See A New Photo of You

It's so terrible you're alive. Reckless
and violent against

my present. I'm not saying I'll come back:
but your shards still cut me and bleed

like glass when I talk. Nights
in Columbia—you were so angry back then

—we'd steal bottles just to smash them,
fuck from where we threw them,

let their crashes scream from the rooftops
over what's obvious:

that you're spoiled and I'm troubled,
but I'm still troubled when I see

your photo today and I falter when I picture
you hoisting your hair up with both hands,

walking past storefront mirrors
on Ninth & Elm. It confounds me

you exist, still breathing
in Missouri, still hanging

with those same people I barely
remember knowing. We slept together

so often, but I'd be blinded now
if I could see

you dabbing yourself with lavender
every night before you sleep. Your palms,

your ankles, and cheeks. You did it
once for me too. People

shouldn't be so pretty always. Now I'm
left to fathom

how anyone ever does that
in the first place.

Easter

They say the only way to love someone else
is to love myself first and they're right, but loving myself

means fucking myself, and fucking myself
means drinking so much I dream of going gutless and fucking

my roommate's girlfriend just to prove to him I can.
What happens to self-actualization when I know in all actuality

I'm actually an asshole? I deserve only what I give myself. Send me
to a country where men flay themselves for Easter

and I swear I'll be at home there: my skin wearing ribbons
of its own blood, my hands working the whip like a harp.

Alpha Centauri

On my answering machine, the sound of your voice.
A pill before coffee. After supper. With milk.

I'm burning. The stars in a hostile night. Your pulse
is the rotation of your body: your light: your signal.

The lake where your parents raised you. Cicadas. My heart
beating Morse against yours, muffled by ribs and skin.

Nothing ever sounded better than your voice when it says,
"Andrew, it's Anna." Sacred sleep.

When I'm with you. Those breasts, fallen like leaves
across the spot where my heart is buried. I rarely pray.

I wonder how other people spend their days. I'm wandering
like a patient from his bed. Puzzled by a bus stop.

The Crook

I wish I could tear your heart out, spread it like jam
across unfinished skin, show you how large it is

when crushed. Not everyone is strong. Just hold me
when I'm silent in the crook of your thighs and hair, remember

that if organs are land, yours are all mountains
and mine are made of sand. Cup your hands when I fall

piecemeal and steady, but don't look up to stop me
from spilling in the first place. People need good

to see evil, and I need
something awful to deserve you.