

## thoughts 2.0

### a walk to class

since when do dogwoods grow in california?

i thought i left them behind in georgia

the summer we said goodbye to open spaces and mosquito bites and the place i called home

i miss the crepe myrtles (i used to call them crate and barrels) and that funny little mole who came back every spring

the magnolia tree was the worst for climbing but the loveliest to look at/ with her ivory buds, reaching arms, and twisted stature- like she was turning to whisper something very important to the person seated a row behind her at the movies

the pines perched like soldiers, guarding the spot where the honeysuckles hid and the field where we danced with the fairies and the lightning bugs

/the state's flower is the cherokee rose

*rosa laevigata*

who owns the flowers?

they lined the road to the

cha-ta-hoo-chee river reserve

where i called to the

snowy egret

she is a great conversationalist

## **Days**

Friday the 13th is coming up  
and it's a leap year

holidays are strange- specified days to feel certain ways and do  
certain things

but feelings are spontaneous

??

sometimes my heart bursts with fireworks like the 4th of july in  
the middle of January and sometimes I am hungry for thanksgiving  
dinner in june

What is it like for the people who find out they will be  
parents/are very sick/have won the lottery on April Fools?

jesus is dead and people party like it's his birthday every year

but what about those who are still living

## **safari:**

is the gazelle aware of her impending fate as a cheetah quietly  
stalks

then ignites like a firecracker?  
the hyena cackles in the distance  
thankful to be one notch up in the food chain

while the hippos and the crocs bask in the creeping sunlight  
over the hills, eager to take a dip and give the cool water a  
kiss

the baboons and bonobos howl from the baobab trees -

in the mud the water buffalo scowls and mutters to himself that  
he's getting too old for this

meanwhile, a baby giraffe is opening her eyes for the first  
time / wobbling to stand, just gaining her footing

## BALI

1. rice paddies thump with the heartbeats of the mud and the leaves and the morning dew

transformed

into a space stiller than still  
yet alive with the humming of lightning bugs/ who vex you into following their light but lead you astray

the moon is at her halfway point (full or empty?)  
leaving just enough light to find your way home

1.2

we revel at the fact that  
"the human brain is the only thing that has named itself"  
but two summers ago in bali i shared a room with geckos (and the occasional toad)  
who clung to the walls and cooed their little song  
"geck-go / geck-go"

so if the geckos named themselves i am left to wonder why it is that they are not granted the privilege of being elevated to likeness of the grand and magnificent entity that is

the brain

or if perhaps it's time we humbled ourselves

1.3

in bali funerals are an elaborate and glorious event  
they are not sad  
but rather a release- the body returning to its earthly elements with a beautiful fire ceremony and dancing and barbecue  
before the drive home i had to pee  
our driver pointed at a door of someone he knew and told me to stop in there, they wouldn't mind

i walked up the carved concrete ramp and peeked at the offering temple in the back then walked in the house, only to be smiled at by a young woman, two toddlers, and a man who looked to be about 400 years old

they pointed to the bathroom, i did my thing, smiled, thanked them, and left

upon my return to the van i learned that i had in fact walked into a stranger's home (the acquaintances were the next door over)  
(are any of us really strangers)

people are so kind when you give them space to be

## RACHEL

i remember the day i found out about you  
there was not a shred of jealousy or fear in my six-year-old  
heart  
i couldn't wait to put a face to the kicks i felt coming from  
mama's tummy  
and i fantasized about having someone to play mermaids with

i also remember the day mama told me that you were special  
and that you had bones like glass  
(you've taught me to be gentle)

and that the doctors told us you wouldn't come home with us from  
the hospital  
(that was the day you first defied the odds)

mama and daddy didn't have a name picked for you  
and when you were miraculously still alive 14 hours after you  
were born

(you looked like a caterpillar with all the wrappings on your  
limbs /they were so new, i couldn't believe they could already be  
broken/)

the nurses needed something to write on your whiteboard

"Baby Lipstick!!" I squealed  
the nurses smiled, laughed, and picked up the expo markers

"NO WAIT!" i interjected  
"let's do Baby Eyeshadow. I would be too jealous if her name was  
lipstick"

For the next string of time (who knows how long it was, my brain  
has probably warped and bended it beyond the point of  
recollection)

you were baby eyeshadow

until you weren't

/RACHEL/

you were so itty bitty  
far more than the other newborns

and in the next chunk of [time] there were many occasions when  
people remarked on what a lovely and life-like doll i had

you fascinated me (you still do) with your tiny fingernails and  
your blue sclera

the first day you walked (with your tiny little walker and  
cowboy boots)

was magic

and even though land and gravity are sometimes too much for your  
legs to handle

you are the closest thing to a real-life mermaid I know  
(it's like you were made for the water)

we're both pisces (what's the plural of that??)

to think that you will be 14 in 23 days gives me goosebumps  
because if i had to tick off all the things you've done in your  
13 years they would amount to something so big i'd need to use  
the stars as numerals

( you make my heart feel so full it could burst )