

*The Yellow Carnation, Sitting*

I found a suicide note  
on top of a shoebox  
filled with love letters  
and thought about the girl  
who once loved me but left.  
I keep missing  
when someone says  
they love me; forever  
keeps getting interrupted.

A yellow carnation sits  
on the window sill, being  
more stem than flower.  
I didn't think anything of it.

Yesterday, the rooftop became my best friend.

There is a small pond in the front of our yard  
that froze over and a teenage boy  
was skating on it.

When he fell to the ground  
it was supple,  
like melting  
into Earth's beauty.

Maybe this is our honest purpose.

I have never loved anything  
more  
than the way  
I love everything.

*Le Bain*

My mom doesn't let me drive her car.  
Instead, she reminds me to wear sunglasses  
when driving, her's has a pink lens.  
So here I am  
and the world looks pink. Honestly,  
I was trying to write about once being raped  
and I'm aware that it's a dense topic.  
I'm not sorry  
but also, it's hard. Now,  
I'm trying to create something new.  
Something like an audible representation  
of the way we view things.  
I don't have much, except  
a new aloe plant I purchased for  
a man and the sake of him and his irritated skin.  
It's big and mighty and thirty whole dollars.  
I thought, *be better be worth it*. But to be a plant!  
Or to be big and mighty. To be ever-growing  
and in constant consumption of light. To be him  
and me, him and I, us  
bare and locked at the bridges of our nose.  
To be me  
in love with him and his smile pressed  
up against my skin, or his exhales placed  
on my armpits as he sleeps.  
We're at a club on the Lower West Side  
walking down from the smoke area  
two flights of stairs and walls lathered  
with black-inked doodles of cartoons kissing  
in various positions. The room is not only  
tall and narrow, but the lights above are  
making it hot pink.  
Here we are.  
Sinking deep into a pink bubble bath.  
I'm not even popping the bubbles.  
And I'm certain  
that this

is what it feels like to be in love  
with a man who smiles  
into my armpits, who reminds me of aloe plants.  
Who came after the other who had raped  
me. This is what it feels like  
to be scared.  
I reach home and immediately  
burn my right calf on my furnace,  
deciding now is the perfect time  
to reflect on all the ways  
I have unintentionally hurt myself.  
No, I digress instead  
to all the times, I have bled.  
My mom once said while driving us  
we bleed to get rid of old blood.  
There's also that saying, pain makes us grow stronger  
how cliché. My skin is blistering  
but I'll let you know all the ways in which I grow.  
I'm not necessarily trying to heal any more,  
I'm just trying to create.

*Leaving the Party*

The frat parties and hidden tequila bottles.  
The hidden tequila bottles at the frat parties, not many  
except the ones we found. And most weekends  
we partied. Within clouds of sweetened substances,  
we tricked ourselves  
into loving the life we had been pulled into.  
We gawked at stringless balloons and kept them afloat.  
We purchased new sweaters and miniskirts  
for the sake of forgetting  
the memories we tried to rewrite.  
The parties all felt the same. Dancing,  
searching for things to conquer.  
Like the men, or the booze  
the hidden bottles or the instances  
when the balloon flew up a bit too high and  
stayed stuck for perhaps a bit too long.  
And made us question.

It was the frat parties and the pink sweaters,  
the pink sweaters at the frat parties.  
Not many. Except for the ones we wore. Distinguishable.  
The music was never just one color, and  
we were at best two different shades.  
I had told myself that night that I wouldn't  
leave the party to look at the sky. The big big sky.  
So instead there were the head tilts,  
and hips, and the way one couple held onto each other.  
We went to these parties to observe  
and be observed. And then  
there was the intangible.  
Like the next morning, how the sunlight glared upon everything  
in a way that made it all difficult to see.

*Making Banana Pancakes*

I was lonely enough when I moved across town  
to an apartment surrounded by rats.

Now,  
the bathroom toilet sits centered and the shower drain keeps clogging.

And each morning I am comforted  
by the sing-song of the garbage disposal and the burning coffee.

One morning, the sunlight was timid  
so I danced in a yellow sundress  
and painted all the walls to match.

My landlord scolded me and my roommates  
said nothing as they watched me paint it back.

I was lonely enough when I had moved across town  
without a mattress.

So a man slept with me on the couch and we stayed up until  
our saliva dried out our lips  
and somewhere outside a rat was nibbling on banana peels  
while cancer killed Ruth.

Cancer killed Ruth.

Killed her mother, too.

I make banana pancakes! On days when I need more yellow

And sit in the living room listening to  
the conversations surrounding the apartment.

“Shouldn’t that be enough to tell you that I love you...”

*Shouldn’t that be enough*

I think about befriending the rats  
on nights when the moon is too loud and too new.

How lonely would I feel if love was enough  
to keep them safe inside my yellow-walled home?

*Licking off the Red*

The summer is now a whisper  
so I sit amongst her last breaths  
pitting cherries until they  
are vulnerable  
between the tips  
of my fingernails.  
Licking off the red  
upon palms, my palms;  
thinking about how Dylan  
cheated on Tara.  
And Tara got herpes.  
Not that you need to know who  
they are, but you should know  
that they love each other.  
And Dylan went and went  
and came. And when I tell you  
about this new man  
I'm seeing,  
I tell you this  
because I'm too scared to do it alone.  
I didn't expect  
to be given and to be pitting  
a bag of on-their-way-out cherries.  
There's always that point  
when everything moves so fast.  
Like last night  
when the sky should  
have been black but was navy.  
Too excited for the morning.  
Everything moves faster when  
it's something you're good at  
or used to, and the sky  
is great at being the sky.  
And Dylan was great  
at communicating with Tara  
until he wasn't.  
And there's a pile

of pits before us,  
ready to be devoured,  
aware that their season  
is almost over.

Plump and tired,  
holding themselves up  
high and oh  
so sweet.