

## So Loved the World

Maybe  
only God loves the world.

I'll admit that I have made  
small sacrifices for my small life.

Here is a beige square  
on my shoulder  
distorted and discolored  
by a nicotine patch.

Such furtive appetites  
only disguise themselves  
as connections to the world.

And it's true  
I didn't leave my apartment today.

But my twin bed  
is pressed by the window  
so I can hear the rain at night,  
and my two cats chase each other  
from room to room.

Maybe  
there are many ways to love the world.

## Grocery stores make me feel mentally ill

It's partly the space itself, white and cold  
and endless and hollow at the center. It's like Hell  
masquerading as Heaven, you know, those thousands  
of treats laced with poison. Everything is screaming for attention.

It's partly the eyes. A dozen cameras, a dozen employees  
stationed, a thousand glances. It's the politics of movement,  
and the two-dimensional gazes reflected in plastic screens.  
It's the staring, the observation.

It's mostly my hands, my basket or cart, wide  
and grasping at colors. It's seeing my life take form  
in solid objects, bleeding meat, warm cans,  
PopTarts and beer. It's seeing what I am  
spelled out in a shopping list, it's the thought of home  
and what I bring there, what it lacks and what I choose.

It's identities laid bare.

On the way home, I speed through every turn.

## Séances

My mother was considered wild  
(by 1960's small town standards.)  
At the age of twelve she caused a scandal  
by hosting a séance in the basement  
of the Lutheran church. We shared this connection:  
a love of ghost stories. I once asked her, "What is  
a ghost?" She said, "Someone who can't move on,  
someone with unfinished business."

For weeks after she died, every time a car  
pulled into our driveway, I expected her  
to climb out of it. My father said he felt  
the same way. No one ever dies  
without unfinished business.

The spirits who come back get all the attention,  
but someone has to wonder about the ones  
who never do, about what they found instead  
and where they found it.