

SOMETIMES A FRIEND & OTHERS

Sometimes a Friend

becomes a foe
and that foe becomes a stranger.
She cuts my body in half with words.
Is this how we become less, she asks;
the words bleed into my open heart.
This is how we become more, she says
as she forces my body back together.
She spoke the words I understood,
yet I choose to be the one to walk away.

Directions for Finding Yourself

In a wishing well, you'll find a version of yourself
staring back at you in the rippled water.
She mouths words you cannot hear,
and you cling to the well as she disappears.

That's when you need to wish—
call to her in a language only she knows.
Line your body in lilacs and lace the way she likes,
whisper ~~her~~ your name,
sing to the owls watching from above,
and wait for her to return.

She never comes, and you leave for
the next lost girl to take your place.

Within the Trail, There's a Stone

To escape *it*, you surround yourself with stones
laid in the gravel by your grandfather, who died
long before you took your first breath.

Its air swallows you, most likely will be
the end of you.

You went outside to think, but your neighbors
are arguing and an ambulance drives by.
That's why you stacked the stones together
and fell into the trail.

It sings to you:

*Move above the lost and broken,
for you are stronger.*

It tells you to live,
yet the stones anchor you to the gravel.

You reach for *it*,
the source of the stones:

And a human hand follows.

The Heart is a Home Without You in It

You told me to 'let it be'
but my heart said to 'let it go.'

So I did.

I cast aside your old letters,
the ones that arrived one after another
and the ones that were sent months apart.

I trashed your plaid t-shirts,
your loafers, toothbrush, flannel bathrobe,
your kitchen magnet that said
'bacon is the duct tape of the kitchen.'

The house looks better without your items.
It's less cluttered, congested, full;
the heart is a home
and mine feels better without you in it.

I turn the key in the lock
and let it all go.

Remembering the Place Once Forgotten

Remember the tunnels that drive
through the Smoky Mountains.
Remember the chateaus that peak
out from the red and orange trees.
Remember the hikers that snap
photographs of the fog caught in the wind.
Remember the black bear that covers
the eyes of her frightened cubs.
Remember the shoppers that explore
the repetitive purse and dress shops.
Remember the hotels that offer
swimming pools and free breakfast bars.
Remember the cafes, the skating rinks,
the aquarium, the amusement park,
the streams, the catfish, the trails.
Remember the music that made this place—
Hank, Merle, Dolly and Cash.
Remember how your grandfather taught you
to shoot a rifle outside your log cabin.
Remember the fire that destroyed the trees this autumn
and how you call this place home.
Remember how you once forgot to breathe
when you finally climbed to the top of the mountain.