

The Earring I Lost on the Night You Broke My Heart

At one point a breathtakingly gorgeous pair of
beaming stones evoking diamonds, three long rows
coming to a standstill just above my shoulders.
Dazzling, delicate, and a somewhat heavy burden for my
ears, hence it was mystifying that only once I arrived home
fraught with tears did I feel the weightlessness afforded by
gravity claiming half the pair. To cope with its loss I
have concocted hundreds of endings that befell
it, my favorite being that the earring back loosened itself
just as you said the words that severed the possibility of us.
Knocked to the ground by the force of me turning from you,
lying on the grimy floor of the club until a stranger initiates a
most preposterous chain of events by kicking it, dancing feet
nailing the poor earring like a soccer ball until it flies
out the door, into the night air. Its journey isn't done yet, no, it is
punted one more time through a gaping sewer grate, where it
quickly becomes submerged in sludge and surrounded by
rats scurrying much more quickly than the earring flows in the
sewage. As almost all of humankind's waste, it eventually ends
thrown in the not-quite-unending vastness of the ocean, floating
underwater until chomp! A salmon gobbles it up and no, it doesn't
vanish, the earring has a way to go through dubious fishing practices,
welcomed onto the skillet of an overworked line cook, it is wedged in the pink
xylophone ridges of glazed salmon you ordered. You whip out your phone,
yearning to capture this surely viral moment until pause - you recognize me,
zigzag your eyes for witnesses, then zap it up like a bunch of grapes, swallow it whole.

Ache

In the blue and white swirls
of the shower tiles, I can't stop
seeing lovers pulled together
in a passionate kiss rivaling
the most iconic of kisses - Klimt's,
the sailor kissing WWII goodbye,
The Notebook pouring rain -
these lovers, no matter the angle
or configuration, are inescapable
limbs and lips tangled in ecstasy,
even when I make my eyes blur,
even when I squeeze them shut,
even when I exit the tub and yank
the shower curtain closed and
rush to dry myself, rush
out of the bathroom, away
the lovers remain in
their swirling embrace
pausing only to give
me a knowing smirk
now and then before
returning to the blissful kiss.

The Illustrious Brazilian Wax

As my body hair is impermanently
separated from my body at the waxing table,

I let my mind wander until a royalty free song
I have never heard in my life blares away -

stop making me run, run, run with loneliness
take all the pills your therapist said. Every part of me,

physical and otherwise squirms from the surreally on the nose
lyrics. I'd rather be present in the burning embodied discomfort

of hair ripping from their follicles. As my technician
rubs the last sizzling wax strip on my leg, she says "Tell me

if the wax is too warm girly, you seem like one of the
nice ones that won't say anything if I'm hurting you."

Soon my legs are bald and she requests: "Butterfly
for me please, I'm going to start your Brazilian area now."

This almost draws a giggle out of me as I am Brazilian,
so technically my entire body is a Brazilian area. My mirth

is smothered as she pulls the first strip, as is my ability
to remain present through the splattering and tugging

of wax by the only person that has seen me naked in
[REDACTED]. I escape through a question that has pestered me

for years - when did my nationality become associated with
pussy and asshole? I'm not exactly offended, but it's one of

those coups of language that you barely notice, accept until
you think about it a little harder. Like I beg your pardon.

I mean, there are so few transgressions that would compel
most people to ask, much less beg, for forgiveness, yet I'm

supposed to prop my begging up on display for polite society?
Like that time in 5th grade when my teacher demanded I apologize

under threat of detention after she saw me flip off
a boy. Would she have insisted on extracting pardon

if I had told her the boy spit out that there was no way
I was Brazilian because my [10-year-old] ass wasn't big enough?

I barely register the technician asking me to flip over
and hold my buttocks open for the final, glorious

butt strip. Just when I thought I had gotten used to
the overwhelming odor of melting wax and the riiiiiiiiiiiiip

away with the unwanted, my body is humbled one more time.
"You're all set, my dear." A purely transactional kindness

but a kindness nonetheless. As I slip my panties back on,
I decide not to google the origins of the illustrious Brazilian wax.

I am entirely willing to remain unenlightened.
In this moment I am clean, bare, prepubescent —

This, this is moving on.

Gifts from my Almost Lovers

a hand to brush against
as I witnessed snowfall
for the first time soft flurries
tickling our faces aglow under
a streetlamp posing as
moonlight blossoming
above the sprawling desert
bathing in the smallness of us
two stars grounded enveloped
in the lushness of cacti the
melting red orange pink of
a tequila sunrise delicious rays
of warmth coating our tongues
smiles glinting off the
quivering fires in autumn
leaves crunching beneath the
anchors of our bodies a
forest of blonde eyelashes
entangled aflame in dim
lamp light a brightness
rapturous smoldering
every tender precipice
cherished frightening
too frightening to leap —