

Avocado

I used to think avocados were dinosaur eggs
I'd avoid them in the grocery store
so sure that if I came near
they would shake, rattle open
tiny teeth would nip at my fingers
pinch and draw blood
when I finally held one
my index fingernail
carelessly punctured into the green flesh
I thought to myself
'oh, I've killed it'
before putting it back
burying my crime
beneath identical
stone fruit
and hurriedly scurrying away
years later
I sometimes still feel guilty
slicing them open,
occasionally
I'll mumble an apology
knife in hand
'I'm sorry, I'm sorry
little dinosaur
if only you didn't taste so good."

soulmate.

my sister is my soulmate
my kindred spirit
we were forged in the same fire
I came out coal
but she emerged a shimmering diamond
her edges will cut you
don't touch her
you will not get another warning

she is stubborn, brave and black
she is fashion on a shoestring budget
she laughs in the face of danger
punches it until it cries uncle
then she punches it some more

she carves her own path
in the forest of adversity

with a butterknife
instead of a machete
because she doesn't want
to hurt the butterflies
i never think about the butterflies

she has no fears
is fiercely independent
loves baby animals
more than people
loves books
more than people
people cannot be trusted
people are the enemy

she was five
when our parents left her
at the ymca
they were so focused
on putting me in my car seat
they forgot she was inside

it could not have have been easy
living in my shadow
my sister,
we should have given you all the sunshine you could stand
sister,
you are the center of my solar system
sister:
it is not selfish
to attach your mask first
when the plane is crashing
you are not selfish
you are survivor
you are warrior
you are my second heart
living outside my body
you rebel, wild thing

on my list of favorites
you are written in the header
and the footer and all of the margins
in permanent marker

if i had to be stuck
with one person

for all of eternity
it would not be a lover
it would be my savior
my soulmate
my sister.

Almost.

if I counted the times
I almost kissed you
it would be 93
the first time was at the pool
you were laying on a raft
and i thought how beautiful you looked in the sun
like a baby deer, speckled and innocent
the 27th time you were in the passenger seat of my car
you had to pee so you leaned over to hug me goodbye
my lips brushed your collarbone
i think part of me is still brushing your collarbone
Marking it as my territory
the 49th time it was snowing
I was telling you I loved you
You were telling me you were sorry
The reason you were sorry was a girl
You saved in your phone under sweetheart
the 58th time we were dancing
and I could feel your sadness in your steps
your feet were crashing into mine
Like a speeding car hitting the median
like you didn't want to survive the wreckage
I wanted to suck the sadness out of your mouth
i remember thinking it would taste like whisky
the 71st time you were telling me you were leaving
You had already started packing things
i stopped breathing
you moved close like you were going to give me cpr
but you stopped and i let you stop
why did I let you stop?
the 84th time we were dressed up and drinking
like there was no tomorrow
I kept burning napkins in the restaurant
you told me I was bad news
i wanted to show you
what bad news felt like
the 93th time I was in your backyard
everyone was saying goodbye

i was the last one to leave
you held me until I ran out of tears and words simultaneously
It was a perfect moment I didn't want to ruin with inexperience
I've kissed 94 boys since you left
I think I've gotten pretty good at it
They all say my mouth tastes like ruin, tastes like hollow,
tastes like waiting for you to come back
And pick me
My next kiss won't be wasted on you
Or someone I'm closing my eyes and pretending is you
My almost darling
187 kisses and almost kisses later
You don't get to be a milestone
You get to be a memory.