

## **As a College Freshman**

rose was seeking love  
petals stained deep red  
the kind that is only present  
when joined by colossal pain  
or of course,  
passion

she spent her days analyzing  
criticizing  
instinctively comparing  
assessing  
evaluating  
searching  
seeking to understand  
why the other flowers didn't want her

eventually she would learn  
that her truest admirer  
didn't care  
for her notorious color  
her hypnotizing perfume  
her Sunday night sway

he craved  
her thorns  
the same ones she'd dedicated her life  
to hiding

-when the cactus fell in love

## **At 5am**

my mom asked me not to smoke  
still,  
when you offered  
I didn't hesitate  
I took a hit and  
it filled my lungs  
slowed my heart  
erupted a volcano of thoughts  
at that point nothing could stop  
the lava from seeping through  
our dormant bodies  
I couldn't help but take  
my coughing as a warning  
time wanted to join us  
nothing should feel that good

my mom asked me not to smoke  
but she didn't say anything  
about getting high

I want to live in the illusion  
where my skin meets your skin  
and for a slight moment in time  
it feels like I am yours

safe and absolutely petrifying  
I must remember that being free  
is living without you

when the cage is left open  
the bird *always* flies away  
though we don't know if he yearned to return

would the bird fly away if he knew  
that being free is learning  
loneliness

as if someone drew you  
carefully constructed every  
funny little dent  
blended and contoured  
slid their pencil lightly  
pressed harder and  
after connecting the crooked lines  
found it was no master piece  
because although you are art  
you remain unfinished  
another sleepless night  
came to mark your skin  
showcasing where you have been loved  
and wounded  
perhaps after the rhythm of the  
crumpled sheets on the ground  
stops painting you with desire  
they will realize that your edges  
did not need to be smoothed  
nor sharpened

## The Hookup Dance

it's a thursday night  
we do the hookup dance  
you pretend that I am special  
I pretend this is romance  
cheap color-changing string lights  
surround your scraped head board  
tell me I am so wonderful  
never repeat it afterward

a few swigs later and our clothes  
end up sprawled on your dirty floor  
we don't make love we're just fucking  
your roommate's knocking on the door  
because now it's his turn to bang  
another lonely girl he's found  
thought we would talk  
but you routinely turn around

and that thing that you said back there  
despite claiming not to mind  
I didn't like it but tonight I felt pretty  
and you were the best one I could find  
a song you played on your premade playlist  
tricked me for a second into believing  
maybe this time could be legitimate  
oh how music can be deceiving

constantly reminding myself that  
those lyrics weren't written by you  
but you figured I'd hear not listen  
unzip my dress without thinking through  
I know there's no one here to blame  
too horny and afraid of being alone  
though this won't gift us company  
laying next to you I remain on my own