

From the Department

“Look here. Take your buckets upstairs and fill them with sand. Find the best grains. This is how you’ll keep the draft out.”

At the store, a sifting of character. Cold ironed shirts cloud the racks, warm colors, and I panic the elevator buttons.

“Going up?”

“Going down.”

“Going up first, then leveling out. I heard you need sand.”

“No, no. I need shoes.”

“You don’t need shoes for the sand unless you’re going to walk around it.”

“I feel best in water. Waters. Washing away, washing out, washing around.”

“You need sand. You can get that here. I’ll show you around. Going up.”

“No. Going down.”

I collect all my sand from the stairwell because the sweetest thing my brother did was let me go nicely like the way I care for the quiet things, like I can’t give up the quiet things, like I’ll leave the lines the quiet things.

From the Diction-air-me

I am a bird on a telephone wire. I am teeter tottering
my feet, a crooked pendulum. I am swan
diving to the floor. The wind pulls hard and loud.

(V). I wish I were a boy. I will act
like a boy, say the things they say so they will have to
think about them and me. They won't think that I'm not
there because I'm acting like a boy. It's not cool
it's cold to be a girl acting like a boy but I don't listen
very well to possessed postures not looking for the word I need
to quiet down or shut up because I want a brother and a sister
who want to find me and a voice that does not sing.

From the Un Shore

I fell asleep in the sand, towel-faced, drunk
listen, the footsteps fill with your head
turned, they are steadfast echoes, mouths held
sleeves, cement, turn the water on.

It runs where my eyes are open, it runs to where I hear
the clouds, their waves
disappear, his heels dig the sand.

I remember your face when you fainted. I imagine the things he might say,
the heated look of your back.

Wound he weaves invisible fences, jokes through the words.

*I can't remember the way you hear it. I can't remember us
wrap your arms against the snow
its coldness white, your eyes grey, I remember those
change as clock drawn shades, roll them when needed
because someone forgot their glasses, the bar
melted blue ashtrays, red bucket
your burned back
remember you don't have to find me.*

You don't have to do anything
but make a list, a trace of your vacation.
Make a window, a way to wear the weather,
tool box open, elbows inched in sand.

From the Department

The boxes feel lime-like. Water
pools the photographs, an acidic ring.
When she calls we argue
file folders. I take a shower,
cut the sand in halves.

Ok, alright. I get it.

No, but the mirror warms and fogs
I wrote a man's name there,
I hang my coat on the wall,
my hat on the door.

At the store I root for glass shelves.

“If there's anything I can help you find, I roll the rope,
braid the ladders, rent the knives.”

Yes, yes. I need hardware.
Hardwear. Helmets!

From the Office

She wakes me with a wishbone, a wall cracked win-ter

“Today you go to work. The rain is getting in.
If you feel like the television is an object,
the telephone is an object, you tore your plans
a part. You mixed up all the colors.
Today you wear a grey suit.”

The door revolves, a single space, glass
cubicles file reflective floors, chatter the walks,
distant memo, memory hangs the air in yellow bulbs.
I carry labels for the cabinets and a pen
behind my ear, I talk around a water cooler, a micro
wave. I talk television talk and eat sandwiches,
wonder if I'm working, if the boxes have bled
their colors.