

Maybe the Ocean

I felt like potatoes

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thought if I added the right amount of butter
and mashed myself up for you

you could eat me
and feel full

but you were already fuller than the moon
and spilling over

now it's long past noon
and my lunch is getting colder

it's time I planted a garden,
bought a slow cooker
now I've accepted I will always be,
as I grow wilder and older,
trying to stop begging pardon,
as I peel you off my skin
just to cut myself up
so I can let you in

Maybe the ocean

my emotions turned to oceans
that drowned out years of my life
to keep others afloat,
but then those people learned to swim

and now I am water and salt,
too close, but so far from human
and no one needs me

I find myself lapping up and running away from a shore that has nothing for me,
only to lay down on it again

because maybe the ocean has OCD and hits the sand out of compulsion
like I used to hit lampposts on the way home

because maybe the ocean is paranoid so when sound hits it, it becomes amplified
like when everyone talking becomes too much for me in a room

because maybe the ocean has borderline and clings to the shore
only to run away and manipulate it into asking it back

because maybe the ocean is depressed and drowning in its own tears
with no one to ever know because it became so good at hiding the teardrops
it camouflaged itself to match them

because maybe the ocean is bipolar,
sometimes with waves so massive you could surf them,
if you didn't always crash into the rocks,
and sometimes no waves at all
for so long
that you wouldn't mind a lethal tsunami
just for something to shake you

yes, maybe the ocean is
strong,
holding within itself so much unpredictable power,
but choosing to show up reliably and gently upon the shore
each day

Don't you know?

you care so much about how things are supposed to be

...don't you know I wasn't supposed to be?

you like long words like serendipity,

...but have you felt their syllables dissolve to a tang on your tongue,

while you thought through those things you've never done?

because I listen to the way you hold your memories together in stories

just the right weight

to be lifted by the strongest muscle and truest liar in your mouth

and I look past all the ways you have learned to configure the skin around your

eyes

and ask

after everything you have been made to be

do you even know who you are?

maybe this is why sure-footed people tend to get lost around me

Forgiveness

they talk about forgiveness like it's something you do one time

and you're free

like you're locked in a room and only have to search for one key,
and I was lucky enough to find that piece of metal, shining on its chain,
I opened the door
only to find
another behind that looked just the same

they told me forgiveness was a cocoon I had to shed,

but I only had seven layers of skin, so I shed them all

and I bled.

turns out forgiveness is something you have to do every night
sometimes it tastes like the sweetness of freedom
sometimes like the sweat from a fight.

now I've forgiven myself more than a thousand times over,
I've done it down low,
up high
and sober.

I can tell you forgiveness
is like water splashing on your face
and each time it gets colder,
you grow up,
get older

I thought if I blew up enough balloons, I would float away

stay up for once without laying down at the end of the day,
but balloons pop
and even the plastic eventually decays

for forgiveness is not flying,
it is slowly dying
and coming back to life all over again
for forgiveness is not a letter you open,
it's a signal you send
up to the sky
not looking for a reply

or even for anyone to see or smell the smoke
it's a comedian's self-depreciating joke
that he keeps telling
night after night
whether or not it's selling

forgiveness is not about wrong or right
or even okay
it's not closing your eyes to the world each night,
but when you open them to let in the harsh light
of day

they talk about forgiveness like it happens one time and it's done,
but for me it begins again and again

each moment

like unwrapping my first birthday present on repeat

to remind myself I am allowed to die

and come back to life

at least 7 times a week