

## sleeping bags

in a silent house, wakefulness  
is our cloak of invisibility.  
so we listen to the gossamer touch  
of our feet on the linoleum floor  
echo between us like a shared secret  
and we step out into the lavender haze  
of 2 AM.

i once wanted to tell the future, but  
omniscience does not rid me of vulnerability.  
i can already see this moment  
through nostalgia and i know  
even this gentleness is apocalyptic

but you, with your chameleon skin  
i can't tell where the stars end and you begin.

## glow-in-the-dark

Mercury Venus Earth Mars Jupiter Saturn Uranus Neptune Pluto

my dad hangs them on my bedroom ceiling

glowing orbs hanging from

clear string hanging from

star-shaped push pins.

saturn was my favourite.

i watched its rings glow every night

when sleep didn't quite reach me

before the monsters did.

until

Mercury Venus Earth Mars

My Very Excellent Mother

nine planets glowing in the dark

of a trash bag

i cried on the kitchen floor

i cried over the pancakes that

My Very Excellent Mother

served me the morning after.

# echo

there is power in being lost. all at once, disappearing is on her own terms.

her name is the first to go. at first she sees it in the stars, constellations spelling out the letters, and she wonders if others who share her name can see it too. even months later, when the stars go blank and the syllables are dreamlike and vaporous, she feels it in the woods, whispered against her ear while she sleeps.

the trees remember. the trees always try to remember.

she finds names etched into tree trunks by long-forgotten lovers. the trees mourn them—she feels it when she leans her cheek against the weathered bark and breathes in deep.

the forest was once an entire universe. as the months fade into years, she realises how much of space is defined by memory, how much strangeness and beauty is stifled the moment it is known by heart. sometimes she misses the comfort of being known; the forest, ever shrinking, convinces her otherwise.

there are early mornings spent collecting mermaid scales from the shore. there are pitch-black nights spent collecting constellations from the sky. she returns them to their home and they leave stardust in her hair.

her voice is the next to go. she breathes into the wind and feels the thunder in her throat. raindrops hit soil and create sound before dying; she cries for them and her tears fall to the ground silently.

once, she hears footsteps on the path and fights the urge to scream. she inhales sharply and the footsteps stop and listen. she waits, holding her breath. the silence is brittle, so fragile that she almost reaches out to shatter it.

but the footsteps speak first. “hello?”

before she can open her mouth, another voice whispers, “hello?”

the footsteps begin again. “echo,” they mutter, and fade into the distance.

*echo*, she mouths. names are dangerous things. the first full moon after she begins to run the syllables over in her mouth, smooth and sharp and forgiving, her skin remains solid in the moonlight for just one night. she has not missed being human. still, she keeps the name.

there is power in being lost. she is no longer held captive by memory. instead, she drifts. she sleeps in the cool, solid arms of the trees and she does not dream. sometimes in the moonlight she thinks she can see the leaves through her arms.

these are the worst days.

there is magic made just for her. the rain chases her even when she cannot be seen. the moonlight caresses her, but in the morning it is quick to forget.

in the morning she closes her eyes and dances until she is forgotten by everyone, even the trees.