

How Things End

It starts out black, deep and suffocating. You read your horoscope, your palms, your tarot, waiting for the universe to suddenly reach out to you. "The time is now," it whispers, "you don't have to do this anymore." And this fades into grey, into the ringing in your ears. You hold your breath, your tears, your heart, your curses because it's better that way

you think.

Better to stay calm, stay quiet, stay in this than not. You try to remember how to be happy, to giggle, to be a girl who smiles when the door opens. But when the door opens, there is only dust, and it makes you cough, and your eyes begin to water. You are allergic to dust. And all goes dark again. You try to sleep; the hush of midnight swallows you; you sob quietly into the shadows, your arm, your hair,

more nights this way than not.

You are in the kitchen; the steam from the pasta hits your face; you want to cry or scream or run, but you don't. You stand there and think, *I am not a lunatic*. You sit down to dinner and listen. You smile, you nod, you are interested, but your mouth is a clam, so tight not one pearl is released.

And these are evenings.

You are so tired that your body is an empty paper bag, ripped, and crumpled lying on the floor. And every now and then the air rushes in when the door closes and you float through the living room landing quietly on a pillow, and you dream that you are a human, and not a crumpled, dying paper bag. And in this dream you sing and laugh, your voice so smooth and strong that you can't hear the slam of the door. You aren't alone anymore. You feel the cold tile on your face and the dirt from shoes in your eyes. And your mouth is filled with mud, thick and imposing. And slowly you begin to die

right there in the middle of the kitchen.

Remember

I can't remember
the way
my throat swelled
shut
around your naked words

glass
sky

the way
stars shattered
dust
in my
glazed
eyes

or that razor verb junkie
swerve
in my veins

Gash
Dance

You lashed around me
slicing
the ins of my ribs,
the hollow between
my thighs

I can't remember

Your acid lips
That fire kiss
My throat dissolving
Into heat

Sear
Ash

I can't