

Awakening

“Hello? How are you doing?”

“What do you mean you swallowed too much medicine?”

“Call an ambulance”

Click.

Panic.

Darkness.

A fluttering of lashes

My eyes open in a place

Where people wake up

Alive.

Stories take wing

From the mouths of survivors—

A girl sniffed cocaine

From the stem of a rose,

A woman sold online,

Forced to dress like a clown,

And then beaten.

Sweat on my brow

Tree pose—serenity

Carved from desperation.

I wipe the tears

from freckled cheek wounds

And glance at scars

Etched deep within.

Buildings burn.

Trembling, falling.

Let us still the quaking shoulders

Of the wrongfully accused

(Tears fall so thick and heavy now

They might as well be blood.)

I can hear someone cry

Standing in the mirror

Covered in markings

From scissors and knives.

Down the hall,

A boy

Seventeen,

Cannot stop vomiting
Because of the drugs
Intended to cure him.

Night arrives, cold and useless.
My body aches from suffering
A thousand sleepless nights.
Unreal voices
Cut through the dark—
Wrong medicine.
Death smiles coldly
From the face
Of a trained professional.
I hope my body fades
Before my mind.
(Life slips from view
Each time the sun goes down)

I feel my stomach curdle
Like spoiled milk
I step into the bathroom
To curl on the floor,
In the shape of a giant,
Listening ear.

I feel like I will die here
My face pressed tiles
Of this little white room,
Off the corner of a cafeteria
On the second floor of a hospital
Outside of which the autumn wind,
Indifferent to my pain,
Ruffles the serene mirror
Of a lake.

Red. No breeze upon my cheek.
Will I ever walk under the stars again?
There are chains on the windows
And we are not allowed
In one another's rooms
I'll sing to myself while I wait
For a reply.

Green

The insurance has suddenly expired
You are now free
To go out
Beneath the stars
And die
Alone.

My eyes peer hungrily
Through the unfathomable night
I no longer sleep to dream,
But dream to awaken.

A steel train, whistling low
Carries me away
Past electric cities
And acres of wood
Where trees breeze by
On velvet hills
And winking stars materialize
On the blue horizon.
“Goodbye,”
I whisper
To this fragment
Of my life
As it fades
To memory.

In the east
a pink light glows
Faint on the horizon.
Tomorrow is coming.

Tomorrow is a place
Where I will wake up
Alive.