

A Few Small Things

Now Say It With a French Accent

Listening to Billie Holiday

To Fall

A Speck and a Speck

Video Games

Now Say It With a French Accent

Okay, that's fine he said.
 Now say it with a French accent.

She wanted words to stream from
 her eyes and ears and fingertips
and plant little green letters in
 the moist soil of her brain, sprouting
little green syllables and feeding her lungs
 with eloquence and oxygen.

She wanted a smirk to grow in her smile,
 a Daisy Buchanan-kind of glow in her eyes,
 a confidence she could never muster
feigned with red shoes, black bras, and
 dark lipstick, waxing beautiful.

She wanted the nausea to GO AWAY
 for him to look at her without her eyes
 looking away because she can't
hold the gaze of someone smiling so sweetly
 without an absent-minded shadow
 sulking beneath her skull and extra-length mascara.

*No don't push my hair away
 don't tell me I look good
Don't align your fingers with mine
 making me laugh in the middle of the night.*

I'm bad at accents she says.
 He smiles, and
 she wanes.

Listening to Billie Holiday

After 8 p.m.

she says,
jazz is just the best thing to listen to.

I smile and say I agree

(*"forevermore..."* swings the final notes, her old
1940s voice crackling
in the static of all the
time gone by)
and my heavy thick-rimmed glasses slide a little
down my nose.

Our little one-room house

– one window, one lamp,
one door, one floor, eight drawers –
glows with warm salty smells
of twenty-nine cent noodles
and tea.

Honey still sticks to my lips.

I can see it from the outside-in

(*"the way you change my life..."*)
our quiet coexistence
our fingers tapping, polite smiles across the room
our stubborn window left open a crack
letting a little bit of jazz
trickle into the September sky at 2 a.m.
on a Wednesday.

To Fall

In my life as a leaf, please cling to me.

My anatomy is s p r a w l i n g
my DNA like morning light
and the wind heaves
heavy thoughts and consolations.

My spine is brittle and I feel my fingers cracking.

Will I snap?
Will you catch me?
Will you twirl my broken bones
between playful, careless hands?
Will you drop me?

In my life as a leaf, please sing to me.

My eyes are dry, and raw with light
my ears hear only sighs
and the darkness buries dreams of warmth
but there is solace in constellations.

A Speck and a Speck

Dirty chai in one hand, cigarette in the other
he sits beside me on a cement bench and when
I say her name he looks at the ground and smiles.
Im falling he tells me quietly. Im falling for her.
He looks at me.
I know I say. I know she sits in that room in your head
you made special for her
crisscross applesauce
wrapped in something made of gold

He takes a drag and I watch the smoke
dissolve in the sun
changing before my eyes like photosynthesis an alteration
simmering in the space between us, resting
with everything in his eyes and in his head
and with the colors of July and the weight of the
air beside you when somebody is missing
and you are missing them
and he is missing her.

I take a small sip
he breathes a deep breath
and she floats through the polluted air
a vision made of something gold
every freckle a sister of a star that reminds him that the world
really isn't so big and even when it feels like
the space between them is the space between a constellation
and the low rumble of the sea
that we all crawl the surface of a pale blue dot
and they are two specks crawling to be closer.

She makes a hmmm sound, sends
a million paper cranes up the coast and across
the street wispy strands of hihowareyou dusting
over bruises from summers before, resting

like a pause

a summertime caesura

and it just kills me that hes still sitting there, smiling
like an idiot because to him she is perfect and
I cant help it I smile too
because I know what this is and I like to think that
when youre in love it's always 3am
and in the middle of the night, that's it.

Video Games

Supermarket – you are there sometimes
although it's always in my head.
Vapor / silk / a stain on my lace

when I hear your name now
I don't think of your face.

The days behind desks are rubble on the moon
and breathing without your oxygen mask is
beautiful and soiled
the soot
of urban waves no longer filtered –
they crash and collapse in my lungs.

I gasp.

We move awkwardly through glowing gates
like in the video games I never loved
the way you wanted me to.

We lost a life –
but we have three more.

The 8-bit music resounds under rocks, pulsating
awake in the coffin –

I saw every color on earth with you, but
I'm a newborn, and now
these colors
are new.