

Orange Drops of Hope

Paper bodies fold as I scribble their name,

Across my heart,

Hope to die

For the aura that paints

Picasso inside of my mind.

The *Weeping Woman*, the *Old Guitarist*, the *Girl Before a Mirror*

Replicated by the people who saved me,

Prepared me

To dive under the waves.

Monique yearns for Bryce and her mother,

Dripping from her eyes like the watercolors

She wished herself permission to cry.

Can I confess,

Brush stroked yellow souls

Never perish?

Tyler, my brother,

Speaks manhood with his fists.

The volume of his voice leaves bloodstains-

Cardinal red anger, passed down his family line,

A bone-dry tradition.

Why

Did he dare violence

Before he understood how beautiful being a boy is?

Amelia wrote baby blue poems that closed

In a five foot question about adventure,

Conveyed to me how to love,

How to grow

Into my father's shoes, never following in his footsteps.

Too busy,

Collecting complementary colors

and orange drops of hope

From the Monarchs, the fruit, the loneliness in a face I've bared a bitter farewell to.

Or chasing kids with screaming purple hearts

Ironed onto their cotton sleeves.

Paper bodies unfold

Upon me; the tales written in color schemes.

The New Testament

If bread and wine is the body and blood of christ,

Religion is the cork forcing my mind to ferment in its darkest thoughts.

And God,

God is the bottle opener popping off each layer of my skin.

Don't use the Lord's name

In vein

Yet he sliced through mine.

Prayers shouldn't start with a bloody wrist, end with Amen.

Mercy is supposed to be a Christian's landline.

Engraving my Pastor's words onto my tongue

Won't erase my own.

Poetry is my spare key under the mat when loving myself

Feels like growing a tree by tearing its roots from the ground,

Climbing a mountain by getting caught in a landslide,

Heating a house by lighting a fire inside of the walls.

Mom -

Help me, like a garden growing in your womb

Plant a support system inside of my shoes.

C-section every reason why I shouldn't paper clip

Another suicide note to your praying knees.

Falling through your fingers like weightless pennies,

My chest cavity can't hold anymore of your wishes.

I'm not a well, just a drain circling the end of each day.

If actions speak louder than words

My death will be silent.

Dad shouldn't have to write my eulogy,

He needs to carve his daughter's name on a gravestone,

I was never her.

I was the silver lining,

Disappeared as quickly as the smoke from your cigarette.

My scent stained your wrinkled t-shirt,

You left my identity in an ashtray.

I'm not going to be your little girl's imaginary friend anymore.

Your son's name-

My name,

is Caleb,

like the faithful man in the book of numbers.

I'm sending myself to find the promised words, you will still love me

Like Moses sent him to find the promised land of milk and honey.

Since November

Stamped your tongue with compliments,

Mailed your eyes to my memories,

Our bodies a cardboard box.

Love has never felt bigger

Stretched across a thousand miles.

Roadmaps are written in their own language.

Only you and I

Can read them,

Can speak for unmarked cities

Held between our hands as tightly as palm shaped promises.

Your smile, a calendar,

X's across your teeth.

The time we've been apart

Seeps through your jaw

Like raindrops

Dropping,

Trickling, falling,

Falling for-

From the roof of the house I cannot see.

Please

Don't count the days one more time.

It hurts to remember what you smell like;

Coconut oil.

I love you

Like a wound loves becoming a scar.

Swallow patience dressed as an airplane ticket.

My voice travels the distance,

Skin must wait.

Wait

To hear stories my callouses will whisper to your fingertips.

My lips hung self-portraits of my kisses on your neck.

Your curls,

A museum for my secrets

Coiling silence in our voices.

I miss you.

I miss you.

I miss you like I will never have the yesterday before we said

Goodbye.