

## Pluto

*For Maria, in love and memorial.*

I feel your absence—a vacuum in my chest, pressure against the beating of my heart. Presence in spite of the void.

The frequency I've been touched by loss leaves me brittle. Branded by the sigils of those I can embrace only in my dreams.

Still, I'll think of you with a smile. For bearing the scars of your passing means that you were here, no matter where you might be now.

## **Pebbles & Waves**

She didn't know if she liked his taste.

Too much of the hopes and gently nurtured expectations seemed to beg for entry to her mouth at the tip of his tongue.

She wanted to breathe.

Her mind and body warred for understanding. Her heart silent, save for sadness.

He liked her too much. Far too much.

And how could she in good conscience give herself? She, a shadow of the affection he so ardently sought all the while labeling himself stone.

She was the sea and would wear him to naught.

## Lover

It's all or nothing. I have no fear of the flames.

I cannot have things halfway. Non-committal replies and actions will only guarantee that I find you unpalatable and dull.

Carry on your diluted exchanges with those that *enjoy* it.

I want *intensity*. The same flavor punch of black coffee, rather than the gentle comfort of tea.

Share with me the heaviness accompanied by desire. The prickling burning of skin, restlessness of limbs, hands that ache to touch, and the absence of air when you're near.

Experience the labor of breathing when you're burning from the inside out.

You need to desire me from the very root of what you are. Lust formed from the smallest molecules of you.

Only then will I capitulate.

We can become ashes together.

## Quiet (Rainy Days)

She slipped as easily into his arms as she did out of her clothes.

In the aftermath she contemplates the state of things and morals doffed like a summer dress.  
Crumpled on the floor.

Rain falls. Large drops lingering on the window easing their way down, absorbed by the ever  
thirsting soil.

She regards her companion, allowing the enormity of their repose to swallow her  
contemplations.

Soon, she'd be on her way and there would be more than enough time to fret.

*Dysthymia*

Tremulous and timid the words don't come. Won't come. Stuck somewhere between larynx and tongue  
never to escape my mouth. The clenched gatekeepers forged in slick enamel.

Opportunity passes and with embarrassing frequency I find bitter cocktails of burned bridges occupy the  
space of unborn utterances.

Masochism, an explanation. Adoration of melancholy's sweetness moors me to my cautious observation.  
Present but never part of. The more I drink, the more I thirst. Permanently parched.

I wonder how fear can so effectively paint a more hellish landscape than the one I find myself willingly  
inhabiting—a grove of ashes.

Haunted by shades and hollow trees that bear no fruit.