

like being alive twice

i was a machine that did not think
of me. my hair so long you couldn't
pull it. off of umbrellas. i stood in useful
sentences. watched midnight chase
the sun into a lower heaven. when i
was 19 i tried to pay someone to kill
me. i took the subway to his house.
i cannot guess what you are thinking.
my heart stopped on green for me.
i went home instead and stared
at the top of my legs. he died an afternoon
later. unrelated is what i tell myself.
i want a cleaner freedom. the color
of a train running backwards.

nominative determinism

i memorize the way you end our phone calls, your voice
a small dish in the center. i laugh with my best hand, starring.
pleasure knocked back. precision covered in attic frost.
on my way home i watched a couple argue about missing keys,
i mean, assuming they were a couple, my only evidence
being the way they stood at each other, breath at all points.
i think to love someone requires a losing door. like the first time
i made a sex tape and kept glancing at the camera, sober
for the first time in 4 years. it got me nothing i wanted.
on the phone i can hear you backing your car over cigarettes
untouched by rain. your breathing was just getting good.

september session

baby birds falling from nest
and dying. we prove our bones
in strange ways. i watch helplessly
through my therapist's office window as she
asks *when's the last time you had thoughts of*

wings. thoughts of winging others. she speaks
and another bird autumns. i shut my eyes to black
the bleeding. the air between us stutters, gives my mind
away. to contemplate is to chew

is to chew isto chew

without *swallow*: a bird

known for singing when under attack.
she asks have i tried coloring. something to pink
the itch. somewhere a newborn baby twitches
into light for the first time. screams into song.

how much are you willing to understand?
how long is the fall to hold me?

little if at all

after maggie rue hess

maybe i'm thinking of a different movie. the one with the actress
they choose for everything. i was so sure she'd die
in that one (not because i wanted it to happen) since she kept losing
her medication and cool water down (but because she looked as soft
as an exit wound). i daydreamed about pinning her against a wall
(the first time i showered with a girl i touched my back
to impress her) to chase off the flies. in high school my friend
said her dad was so proud she befriended someone as ugly
as me (i didn't know my arm had stairs like that. she climbed
'til the water bruised). so ugly ahead and behind her dad couldn't stop
staring (she got soap in my nose lavender column of air)
then he hit on me and i became a furnished grave, beautiful
condition (when we finished showering together she told
everyone at school). diameter at mouth. handle to handle.
i measured myself between dreaming (our classmates
wanted to know how i looked when collarless: found.) oh lord
make me an instrument of your peace. an incredible
statue (i touch with an unfinished power). i'm learning
it's not the body that lives. it's the shadow.

Client Intake Questionnaire

Please answer each of the questions below. Please withhold where necessary.

PAST HISTORY

Briefly describe your childhood.

I watched none of the movies. Impostered recess. Spoke without speech. Toe walked, as though Barbie, as though knighted.

Were you raised by anyone other than your parents?

God. He was mine until I ran out of grief. The minutes uninstalling. A man spits on my mother's hijab, silvered water. Faith shuts eyes to filth. I tried to be good.

If you had difficulties in the past, what have you done to survive?

All day I've attempted flowers. I'm not alive on purpose.

SEX INFORMATION

When did you first become aware of your own sexual impulses?

When I fractured my skull. That bright open saturn.
Body leaving its body leaving its mother
board. Is this not desire?

Any relevant details regarding your first sexual experience:

First unfiled police report. First tallest memory.

Are you sexually inhibited in any way?

Only in certain angles. Sometimes I play dead. Ghost gold.
Every lover passes through me pronounced. In vowels. Like an ambulance.

SUBSTANCE USE

Have you ever abused prescription drugs?

Pain on a scale of 1 to 10. Of syllable to lightning.
My threshold gets hungry.

How often do you drink?

Until my palms dull, crucified. So starving the body's
thirst. Until I'm stranded blood. Until bones struck
with dreaming.

**Have you ever gone to anyone for help? Are you ever
brilliant? Are you an impossible stone.**

Yes.

Is there anything else you'd like us to know about you?

No.