

*Places (G, before)*

I'm writing this with the pen you left behind.

I lit a joint with the matches from your job.

Can't seem to get you out of my apartment.

I like finding you in the familiar places.

Don't really want you to go.

*Left (G, after)*

I was that thing in a store  
you see when you first walk in  
and you want it badly  
so you pick it up  
and carry it around while you're browsing  
and you're pleased with yourself  
and looking forward to taking it home.

But then suddenly you think that maybe  
you don't really need it  
and it's not really worth the money  
and it's a little off  
a little broken  
a little not quite right  
so you put it down on a shelf  
as quickly as you can  
on the opposite side of the store  
far away from where you found it  
with a bunch of different things  
where it doesn't belong.

And maybe  
you pick up something else on your way out  
something better  
but maybe you just slink out of the store  
with a guilty pit in your stomach  
and relief that you didn't make the purchase.

I was that thing

I still am that thing

and I'm still here where you left me  
only I don't want you to come back.

Eventually  
someone else will find me here  
on this shelf where I don't belong  
and they'll pick me up because I'm  
a little off  
a little broken  
a little not quite right.

*Pieces (M, now)*

being without you  
for weeks at a time  
feels like part of me is hibernating  
waiting for the sun to come back.

every time  
I leave you  
pieces of me stay behind.

I'll see them again,  
but they're yours now.

I'll see you again,  
but I'm yours now.

*Forest Depths II*

We saw it in the woods that night.  
It did not see us back, we think.

It just stood there  
swaying as the fire burned  
and left ash where there was once timber.

It looked like it was listening,  
more intent than a child at a storyteller's feet.

It listened right through us  
and missed the beating of our hearts.

Instead it heard the frogs and the turtles,  
the bats and the mosquitoes.  
It heard the crickets and the owls and the shrews.

We watched it sway,  
then we watched it go.

We did not follow it into the forest depths.

It would have been foolish on such a night  
to follow on foot without a light.

## *Weight*

Let me relieve you of that heavy head. Your shoulders and spine will thank me.

Lay to rest each of your pretty toes, now with no socks to keep them warm.

Let your knees loose, undaunted by the weight of you.

Your hip flexors will sigh in release.

I will read your palms and trace your life line; your fate line.

I will tell you things about yourself that you have never said aloud but had suspected before.

Allow your wrists to unleash the burdens of the day.

Undo the clench in your jaw.

You may feel something crawling up your leg.

It could be an ant, or beetle.

A small spider, perhaps.

It is none of those, but never mind.

Ignore it.

Let it crawl.

Close your eyes, now.

It's better if you close your eyes.

I will tell you the stories of your ancestors.

How they came to be and who they were.

I will start at the very beginning, and I will speak until I finally tell the story of you.

How you came to be and who you are.

The crawling thing will be slow-moving, like a flower reaching for sun.

If you focus, you're sure you detect movement, but the plant appears unchanged.

You won't notice yourself changing until you are halfway different.

By then it will be too late.

Steady your breathing.

Shut away the instinct to scream.

Rest those vertebrae which have been stacked for so long.

Let them decompress.

Soon they will be done with their work.

They have held you upright for long enough.

Let your feet forget your heaviness.

They have moved your weight for the very last time.