

Make Out In My Car

A tender form
of contortionism,
you double-joint

your trembling legs,
he telescopes
his neck and then

you meet where
speech comes,
a hard landing but still

ten out of ten.
Love at the lips
the poet said

but this isn't love.
Your purple
bra comes off

somehow, slicked
through the window
fog, your ass

applies the horn
for one quick
bleat, and love itself

isn't necessary
for love
to be made.

No, I don't mean running
all the bases, sliding
into home. Just

this kiss, this pop
and flash
of all-tongue

dialectic. He just

wants to feel someone
he likes against his

vehicle. He wants
to make out
who you are,

to reach
a glowing fingertip
and find your lips.

Lonely World

I've worn this room's walls
like ghost sheets.
No selfish boundaries

anymore. Whose dust
is this, mine
or yours? I'm not afraid

of never losing you,
of never being
lost. Castoff skin

no match for lonely
inhalation. I breathe
your cells, your

orphans, whose?
No lover here.
No two of us

though other bodies surely
held this court before,
nameless now, lingering.

And isn't that strange?
We're ghosts
more than not, runes

inscribed just once
on meaty slates
and then

what. I told myself
falling in love is two
falling into one, like merging

lanes, and look, I've
danced this room real close
for six years.

It shares my melancholy

smile. The way
my heart sighs upward

when the window's
cracked. Indelible
is the fairytale

every room wants.
This one, too, the one
I've lived through. All these years

of cold hands at the gas vent,
hatchwork of love
on the hardwood floor, and soon

when I leave
and the cleaners come,
their caustic soap won't reach

everywhere my memory
remains, every crevice
I've loved myself into.

No one needs to weep
our loss because the two of us
will hang on. I'll shed this room,

and then I'll threshold
into rented skin
my bride and groom.

Stoicism

So many false
starts, false sparks,
flames that just

wouldn't take.
All around me wet wood
leapt into orange

infatuation,
but not my little wick.
Flintless, curious,

alien. All I felt were twilight
echoes of their love,
cinders from a distant sun.

At 18, I showed my mother
a yearbook photo of Shaun's
frost-blond eyebrows,

like cupping a match
for someone's cigarette.
Oh Justin, she said,

you can do better
than that. No, I never
could do better

than love.
Solitude is merely
different, the placid thump

of one heart,
a single drum drum-
circle, and after awhile,

it almost feels like music,
almost warm enough
to hold you in its sound.

To The Friend Who Pressed Me to Adopt a Cat

—*for C.*

I'm not saying the notion's meritless.
I do like feline sounds— the little bells,
the deliberate, silky chawing—

and I like having my ankles brushed.
My heart, like every heart,
wants to find a home at home

even if underfoot.
It's not that I can't imagine love.
But when I go out at dusk to think and smoke

and a neighbor cat follows me
plaintively calling, dancing for attention,
I know what it means:

it wants more normalcy,
more anchor for its delicate tongue, its purr,
its primal brain,

more fixture in the world.
I offer belly scratches and connect the dots:
the myth of two halves torn asunder,

halves that now use love
simply to keep from teetering too far
out into the night.

The cat lingers outside my window, meowing.
My words, its pink supplication, both fidget
at the frayed edge of our

dim minds. We want
further in. We want someone else
to testify for us.