

My Animal, My Darling

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The food has all gone bad
The cat is not happy with her water
I've lost track of how long the dishes have been sitting there
And I'm floating inches above the earth for you

I speak out loud walking home
Asking bird nests for empathy
Telling trees how much I love you
Softly
and patiently
Imagining you can hear me

I'm struggling to find the rock
my mother says is inside me
Where do I even begin to look?
Between my shoulder blades?
Where I can't quite reach?
perhaps
What kind of rock are you now?
without a body magnetizing you all day

I heard on the radio today
that they found the magnetic highway, after forty-five years of traveling
It will be the first mission to make it out of the solar system
I miss being next to you in your car

I'm struggling to see the color in the life of the little boy I was introduced to tonight
His name is Mars
He asked me if my grandmother died
I almost told him about my grandmother, how she's almost ninety-three, had a bad fall, but she's still alive
and thoughtful
and beautiful
I forget his godfather's name
I think it might be Chris
he remembered my name weeks later
this scares me

I'm no longer a precious place
in your mouth
or around your melodic hands

It's all in a moment
it's all right outside the moment
Time is different without you
I've never loved you more
This time, it's true

Tonight I begged the wet blue air
I begged for affection from the range of goldens seeping out from mute houses
I begged for belonging from the street cats making their rounds
I begged for a holdfast from the ocean where you run headfirst into waves
I watch from the shore with a smile and a wave

I keep imagining us walking
Cassie running, grinning, tail wagging, she keeps looking back at us
I keep imagining us walking
I'm always somewhere with you
and it's just us
You and me, and everything unbearably alive around us

Your hand wraps around my fist
Turtle into shell
Snail into shell
Crab into shell
Shell around shell

The wind takes pieces of my hair out to sea
and rests them over the horizon
The wind is a collector of my oddities

This is the only way to know you right now
My back broken
My body in pieces
Offering whispers of words into postal imaginaries

I imagine a kahloesque bus crash on my way to school
My body golden and impaled, time is frozen
I imagine my small plane crashing on my way back from New York
I would call you mid-air
I would somehow be saved
All ninety-eight pounds of me floating leaf like to ground

This will bring you back
You'll be on the next flight
I'll paint my words in front of you
Strip you down and paint them on you and around you
You'll see

Do you remember when
I told you to smell me
and it stopped us in our tracks?
My smell
Our face closeness
Your face closeness
my animal
my darling