

## Eulogy

1996

I remember that time in the rain. You were in the rain. I was sitting inside my car. I wish I could say you pulled me outside and made me laugh. I wish I could say we danced. Your romantic ideas were too storybook for me.

1997

People used to walk past us and say, "Damn." They were talking about you. It was hard to not be the prettier one.

1998

You gave me a gold bracelet for our third anniversary. It is made out of gold hearts and gold Xs. For three years, I never took it off. Sometimes I still wear it, to remember what love feels like. I run my finger over it, like you used to. I can never remember which is the kiss and which is the hug.

1999

We never had sex without kissing, even in the morning. We always smiled after we saw each other when some time had passed. It didn't matter how we parted. Your eyes glowed. You cared about my pleasure. You always wanted to sit close enough to touch me. You made me feel filled with possibility. You made me feel strong. You looked at me like you knew me. You looked at me like you wanted to know more. You wanted me to let go. You wanted to keep me safe.

2007

You sobbed in my arms. You made baby noises. You were not big and strong. You were small and hurting. You told me that women were worse than men with their catcalls. They made you feel cheap. You, who posed as the centerfold for a porn magazine. You, who flexed your stomach and wanted me to sit on you while you did sit-ups. You cried. You sobbed in my arms. You talked about your mother and how cruel she could be with her insults. You trusted me, and I hope you do not know what I was thinking: *Shut up shut up shut up*. After an hour of this, you made love to me. I took all of that sadness into my body. I took those catcalls. I took those baby noises. I took your cheapness. I took those insults from your mother. I took them in from behind. I told you: as hard as you want.

2008

I am not a small girl, but you held me up for a long time.

2009

Sometimes there are so many big chunks of fleshy grief in your tub that you have to chip cracks in the tub itself to let in rivulets of joy. Enough to fill in the cracks between the chunks. Enough to flood the tub and float those chunks out.

2010

I found this beautiful shell at 100 feet in the Sea of Cortez, barnacle-covered, each half bigger than my palm, lined with mother of pearl. I stood in my bedroom looking at it. I placed one on my altar and thought the other half should go to you. I imagined placing it on your grave. Could I half myself that way? You did not visit me in my dream; you did not come to say goodbye. An alive person should come before a dead person anyway. Right?

2010

You said “yo” a lot. It always made me laugh. You answered the phone, “What’s good?” When they told me that you were dead I said: No. I said it over and over again. I could not find another word. It felt like ripping. Not a wave and not sadness. A rip in everything I had ever known. It felt unacceptable. Death as rapist.

2010

You liked one word: lift. I liked so many. When I visit your grave, I want to take out my pocketknife. I want to dig you up and cut that tattoo out of your inner arm. Lift. I want to sew it into my own skin, to wear it on my inner arm. You said that it was an acronym for something. I don’t remember what. Now it is my wish for you. Lift.