

## I CAN TELL YOU A STORY

It's the middle of night, & I've rolled toward Katie,  
kissed her shoulder –  
                    something I do in these hours, she says,  
            though I never remember.  
She puts two fingertips on my temple,  
brushes hair behind my ear,  
    as I float on the cloud-edge of waking.

I think these are her favorite moments –  
                    the helpless honesty of half-sleep,  
where there are no words to parse or doubt,  
    & a kiss can only mean  
                                *I'm glad you're here.*

Listen – I can tell you a story, but not all of it:

    I can tell you blue ink, how the nights ran together,  
    how I'd wake to her breathing, ashen & full,  
I can tell you the window she never kept closed,  
                                the shadows of trees  
    & her voice – a whisper, *okay, okay.*

Listen – there is no way to end this.  
No matter how it begins, how many times.

On a cliffside, over another city,  
                                clouds sprawl like a quilt.  
Beneath them: thick drizzle,  
                                grey darkness.           Above,  
                                red-orange dusk. A dream of music.

What if we change the names? What if apologies?  
                                If the pilot light's out?  
What if we're on a boardwalk, in the summer,  
                                the whole world flashing & deep-fried?  
If the song were about someone else, on a highway,  
                                a broken promise & so many ways to regret?  
An idea of home left in a bus seat? In a notebook?  
                                In a payphone in Sicily, at dawn, the words so distant  
                                she heard them on a whole different day?

What if all this was gone? If a decade could pass? Our fears  
                                grow hearts of their own? What if the grand gesture  
                                is too small? If we've failed each other  
  one time too far?

What would it take to wake again to that darkness,  
                                That hesitance & shudder?  
Such delicate breath.

God, how do we ever forgive ourselves?