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Preface

Raspberry Fingers

Little hands feed littler mouths.
Sharp raspberry bush spines pinch us,
like love pokes or spider bites.
I'm never too old to
stuff myself with acidic sweetness,
or prick my arms from thorns.

-

Love Pokes

Palms press messy ink into my bones,
I am your finger painting canvas.
Needles kiss my hips,
back arched against cold dorm room tiles.
My body is inscribed by this time and place,
by your touch and our stolen tattoos.

-

Spider Bites

Your pinkie grazes my spine
like a trail of spider bites,
corroding me.
Please,
tread lightly on my
backbone ridges.

Coming Home

"*Oh I miss the comfort of this house*
where you are, where you are"
from "Lakehouse" by Of Monsters and Men

Prairie towns shine like
flashing bulbs on a light bright board.
The flatness fits like an old glove,
musty and cracked.

Crusty lips kiss winter stop signs,
sticking tight and never letting go of
our prickly winter skies and
muddy brown snow.

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Briarwood

50 shades of
beige envelope me in this
suburb of zero erotica.

Streets upkept,
white like chalk or cocaine
on a mahogany kitchen table
or the sticky legs of
pale girls with matchstick scars and
xylophone ribs.

Grass muddy oatmeal,
like the overpriced-khaki-wearing
pretty boys.
Cashing in daddy's cheques at
the dressed up offsale liquour store
on beer and resentment.

And slightly silver mothers speed
down identical streets in their
charcoal BMWs,
with pursed lips.
From botox or judgement of
a brown girl sprinkled in white frost.

Sleepytown home

i

Sleepy cities are for sleepy people,
breeding stagnancy.
The sameness kisses me like a
drunk 15 year old boy,
slobbery,
inescapably stiffling

as our inevitable traditions.
Messy kitchen parties,
three generations tipsy
on craft beer
reflecting lives
always circling home.

Twins surround me on
bright white streets,
twisting me up
suffocating me in colourless waves
drowning me
until everything turns black.

ii

Black as the ocean,
our only acceptable darkness—
for it's beauty,
bygone turbulence
pounding hardened coastlines
softening pliant humans.

Framing idyllic villages
houses painted plastic
bright blue and baby pink
streets shiny
smiling faces applauded
only for the photographs.

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And we stand with our cameras
our plastic rain ponchos,
overpriced purple boots
watching stormy waves
batter this place.

And still we tiptoe
to preserve
our sleepytown home.

Plane Poetry

Ocean: luminescent black velvet
rippling cautiously,
windy gales tiptoeing through—

the toothpick trees.
Green and blue from
rainstorm bruises on hardened shells.
Needles stab the ground,
tirelessly chasing impenetrable skin.
Brown like mine
or dewy green.

And soft yellow lights
dot across sparkly thickness
pretending to make constellations—

Leading us astray.

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Pretenders

I still have the ring on my bedside table,
from that time you carved gently with your
fingernails into peeling purple paint.
Sometimes I'll look in my closet,
pretending to be surprised that your
clothes from eleventh are still on the floor.
My mom always did say I had a problem with letting go.

—

Our sixteenth winter was the year of
sad girl music and crippling anxiety.
We always pretended
we walked through the graveyard because it was faster.
I think we did it because it made us
aware of how alive we were.

Seventeenth winter I shivered alone,
knees pulled up and body curled to hide
from the bristling high school wind,
incessant chatter.
I walked through the graveyard, still
holding vain hope I would see you,
even for a second.

By eighteenth summer I stopped looking.

Humans on Bloor

November 17th
11:01 tears bite my cheeks
down Bloor Street.
Because nothing ever changes.

Why can't I be the
skinny boy
with a Jack name tag and
legs like Pocky sticks.
Hiding in a hoard of others.

Or the old couple,
soft and silvery white and
casually blocking the sidewalk
with wide legged khaki pants,
moving slowly on.

Or the angry looking girl
dressed in all black.
Who probably
fucks her boyfriend mid-afternoon
high on cocaine and desire.

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Bound

Taps
on rotting windowsills
from shaky fingers,
paralyzed by blazing
compulsion.

Darting eyes, or
turbulent miniature
oceans staring intently
downwards, towards—

Scratching numbness,
breeding red rawness and
weather cold enough for
black turtlenecks.

Anxiety is pseudonym
for cracks
that bind me
to the sensation of falling.

Gravity shifts
too quickly.

I can't stop.

Let Me

My wandering eyes run over your
delicate body, I want to
cradle you under my baby blue sheets.
I promise,
I have soft skin, brittle bones.
I would never hurt you.

Touch me, please.
Our brains lay here tangled,
our bodies paralyzed.
My frail shell wants to hold you,
let me.

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Bluelips

The cold and our affinity for blue rasberry ringpops
rendered our lips impermeably blue.
Our teeth shivered,
half from the cackling wind and
mostly because your mouth was
dangerously close to mine.

When I close my eyes
all I can see of you is blue
pounding ocean and
icy confidence and
your electric lips.

And when you finally touched me,
you tasted artificially sweet.
Like maybe
girls who like ringpops and cherry lip smackers
shouldn't taste each other.

SplitSecond

Sprinting through shadows of bulbous street lamps,
2 a.m. on a biting February Tuesday.
The grazing bite of questioning teeth on my lip,
the invisible consent given in soft hands
under her shirt and up her back.
The locked eyes like bubblegum to shoe sole,
a pain in the ass, never-going-to-be-able-to-scrub-off sticky film.
I break it off, typically blinded by her
lustrously thick, batting lashes and
the electric sweetness of a toe across the
line we can never cross.
An inhalation of a sharp cigarette,
feet propped up and eyes taking in the overwhelming
light and dark of Toronto nights.

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Champagne Hotbox

Fuck me like we're in a champagne hotbox
and all you can feel is bubbles
or cannabis messing with your brain,
fogging up your skin.

I hope all you see is me,
or maybe just fuzz
a peachskin veil
imprinted with my silhouette.

Hunched over to shield myself
from human hurricanes whipping through.
Envelope me in your
questioning smoggy eyes.

Or your neon dreams,
pinwheel lights shine
lightning marks on your
translucent skin, soft and bare.

Little Lines

I like to pretend that you touched me
by mistake (or on purpose)
(like a grazing question / a silent telegram
/ an invisible message / an electric shock)

Your silence is deafening, in the
(I need you now / are we friends
/ are we more / are you dead)
sort of way.

And your eyes, they send me messages.
(conflicting) telepathic declarations
(I love you / no I hate you
/ I want to fuck you / you're imagining it all)

we should realize the significance of the lines we cross,
but little lines are all we see.

Maybe you don't see them at all.

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Rules of a drunken hookup

Start lightly.
A whisper passing stickily slow
between your lips and mine,
Whisky filled minds slosh into
lips pressed together,
hard and not soft. Never soft.

Skinny, limber fingers
connect the dots between my freckles.
Girls have infinitely beautiful hands,
the most junoesque bodies and
an uncanny ability to forget.

Every once in awhile you'll stop,
and tell me no one can ever know.
Tell me we're both just so drunk.
Press your finger against my lips and
kiss my neck. I forget.

Sun rises and we wake up foreign,
in an awkward knot of fuzzy brains
and tangled limbs, tangled hair.
Wake up, and tell yourself to forget.
Wake up and be best friends again.

Gathering Dust

All of you
collects in my hardened core.
Edges yellow, and
dust gathers in these expansive
moments of you.

Icy climate of my hollow stomach
breeds nothingness,
or the breaking down of
every second.
Of us.

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Never

Index fingers
pressed tightly between lips,
dampened by fat tears and
bubbly spit.

I am never beautiful enough
to fit my lips into hers,
or ground my brain
in the stark reality of another.

My head will always be
tied to an altruistic universe,
where nothing ever changes
and no one ever leaves.

Bitter Sweetness

Fingers twisted together
twiddling thumbs yearn for connection,
like fiddleheads
curling into themselves.

Or the altruistic hibernation
of a body in a
puffy, plant printed comforter.
Misshapen toes peek out,
nails like eyeballs searching for
something.
Anything, other than
biting cold.

Something like contact,
a cavity holding mine.
Soft skin, fuzzy skin
raspberry hairs in my
stomach, saturating me with
bitter sweetness.
Bloating my belly,
infusing me.
Burning my tongue,
corroding my wintery insides.