

ORDER, MARROW, AND FLYING HOME ON NEW YEAR'S EVE

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Order

It was like a gift.
The sun was seventy degrees,
and I wore my best jeans,
a black graphic tee.
You needed a haircut.
Under a sycamore tree,
we dozed the small, cruel dream
of our life away. The wind
blowing over our faces
like a marble river.

Ruin, above all things,
was patient. I was only eighteen.
The clementines I gave you,
those small, bright bells
would be gone by morning.
When you drew near,
touching the inside of my wrist,
the waves washed between us
in beauty and terror.

Marrow

In the shower, my hair darkens.
The water melting down my shoulders
drugs my body warm and small

as a baby. It keeps coming in thick,
heavy waves, washing away
the last bitter roots of medicine.

It's only January, and I'm already
Exhausted. I can't keep crying, waiting

for something good to last,
maybe through the night and back.
Listening to the last hollow notes drift on,
darkening, beyond what can return.

When the cold pressed in the marrow
of my bones empties down the drain,
I'm only the glaze of a dream away
from falling asleep. Now,
having surrendered,
my face hot and quiet as steam,

I am no longer afraid.
I long for the womb of my childhood,
and I hate the boys I love.

Flying Home on New Year's Eve

Los Angeles, 2021

When the plane takes off,
I know that whatever comes—
bills, bad dates, all the glitter-
ing consequences of joy—
will never come faster than this.
The earth tries to pull my body
close as the new tide.
By then, I'm already gone
and more. Only a line of chalk
grazing the mouth of the sky
from one corner to the other.
The ocean below, long and dark
as time. I don't believe in myself,
or change, or whatever

the plastic billboards say.
But I love a good ending.

And the last page of the day
is already turning away,

leaving behind another year
and its terrible, beautiful face.