

## Nick Wort

### Nicotine

You smelled like my past staring back through a microphone, the voice of a siren when I was younger. How we would dive through the streets and jump in front of moving trains. Madness and loathing, an agoraphobic fit. The way you spun and trembled as the needle landed in the maze, the way you sang and cried and bled on my feet. The holes in my shoes were like pencils falling from the sky.

Elliot died almost ten years ago. And I still sing that song. The nurses never came. The Christmas tree's still there. They gallop through town towards each other.

Jousting is the official sport of Maryland. We sped through the night and talked the sea away, he was left in the basement. I can still smell the burn; it tasted like absinthe and shellac records. I couldn't sleep through the caterwaul and music. I wrote your name on a postcard. It tastes like American Spirits and whiskey from a well. Your lips look like a lit mattress on a match.

The fuse was lit and I pulled it in. Heavy machinery blew by the window. Fog lifted through the strings and fire. There was a cigar box on the floor, it belonged to you.

I'm going to turn your dad in, because I fucking hate you. But I'll never say why. We were trapped in a tub. You burst into a waterfall and smiled like Buddha. I shook like Haile Selassie.

There was a cigar box on the floor.