

MY PERFECT PICTURE: YOU

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POETRY CONTEST FINALIST

Dark rooms, amber lights, blue cyanotypes.
Sharp fumes fill the room with a yellow hue.
And you were there hiding in the negatives
Like an undeveloped glossy print.

I dip you in, corner first and then immerse.
White. Deceiving shadows come to life.
Were you to arrive or did I do you wrong?
A faulty flash, stutter of the shutter?
Overexposed from the very beginning?

Then it happens, I begin to see the harsh
darks in which you were born.
I toss you around in the pool of my developing feelings.
Your edges arrive, pearly white border lines.
Take your time. Fill in the black and whites, grays with no grain.
Then stop. Bathe in your everlasting contrast.

A crisp clear image of my newfound happiness.

But you still need a final coat, a glaze
so fixating, the shine could hypnotize.
Gently, I lay you into your finalization.
Watching you sink in the chemicals.

I take you and hold you in my hands,
yearning for a beauty I cannot grasp.
But I forgot how fragile your print is,
how sensitive your surface.

My eager fingers slide over
your shiny face, and for a moment
we are one. As soon as
my wrist jerks away,
I realize my touch is there to stay.

Me and you at last.
A smudge of charcoal black, the rings
of my identification, permanently staining
the whites of your skies. The oil
of my skin, spoiling you forever.

