

## Anniversary

it took me three years to be able to talk about it without a shake in my throat /  
shuffle in my feet / tissue in my hand / three years before I could find a way to  
beat that memory / no cheat code in sight / find the lasso that could successfully  
tie it up and deem it indifferent / make it known that my weaknesses have made  
me stronger / telling my tale of triumph / finding a way to bask in the subsequent  
pause / waiting for a reaction / hoping it perfect / not knowing what perfect even  
is / hoping for it anyway / owning that trauma / as if it even had a fighting chance

— *Naomi Williams*

## cemetery

when asked about the afterlife my indecisive mind tends to reel a bit.  
sometimes i envision myself living forever  
no reincarnation needed to roam these hallowed grounds  
but other times the thought halts me  
makes me consider why i'm just delaying the inevitable  
a postponed "return to sender" that's anything but optional

i once came across a headstone labeled "specimens"  
as if the gravediggers believed the bones would be thankful for being tossed into  
the worst "Great American Melting Pot" like ever  
trapped under the same headstone  
binded together under literal tooth and nail  
not knowing what came of their existence postmortem  
only being sure of the secret that came after it was all said and done.

tell me why I feel like that headstone sometimes,  
waiting to take my place in an earthly temple.  
it's easy to blend into the grave when you already have one foot in.  
it's easy to feel like you belong there when you know it's where you're going to  
end up.

— *Naomi Williams*