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Sleepy Summers

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The dead remain dead

I was afraid last night

As I slept restlessly

A useless sweat

crept from within me

And with it came thoughts

from everything I'd seen

and the fictions I'd heard

of silhouetted scenes

The clap of thunder

to show a grinning smile

The nothingness of suspense

never two bright blinking eyes

Nothing comes to greet me

nothing unsticks itself from the wall

just to let me know late at night

that it was real all along

That it wasn't good of me
to continue to grow up
and change my perceptions
and let myself succumb

to the logic of the night
that I am safely in bed
Tiny lights create shadows
and the dead remain dead

Still I wait with each breath
until a long saving sleep
for nightmares at my window
for a dead soul to greet

Last year

Last year

Last summer

I left my home

I felt as though I was

Leaving my childhood behind

Like she was dying

And I was trying to give her

All of her favorite things

Make her as comfortable as possible

Right before college

I felt my youngest

And I am the oldest

Of my siblings

And they watched me

Cry like a baby

What I know of Wisconsin

What I know of Wisconsin is in its forests.

I've only ever visited its pastures and plains

its trees and country restaurant terraces,

dense fields and farms. It's a very green place.

Whenever I get to go, it's an early, trusting summer

with yellowing roads and sparkle-dew lawns,

overgrown with roots of the oldest trees

I've seen pines growing over them.

Some as old as me

I know it's wrong

Crashing my face right through the window

If I'm still together, I'll take a shard of glass

and send it through my eye and the other

humiliated like Oedipus

When I'm finally still on the library wall

someone will see and someone will call

But I won't remember their action

of prayer or pity, not even a fraction

Or I'll wake up so late at night

When the house is dark and sleeping

I'll pull the knife out from the drawer

and stick it in my scalp unceasing

Stick it deep into my brain

I feel sharp silver instead of pain

I'll hear its whisper against my flesh

Before it cuts through, I'll never regret

I don't see or hear a cry
from out my lips or out my mom
because they don't know I'm dead
It all ends right there—I know it's wrong

A line of blood runs down my skull
Still covered in zombie flesh to fall
Just beginning to rot away
Just as my ghost decides to stay

She watches the boring story unfold
A story that happily never happens
Because no one comes for me
not in perpetual darkness

My lounging body sits upright
against the counter below kitchen light
Twitching fingers, rolled back eyes
The knife inside begins to rise

Go drown

Summer, it's now September

It's time you left us alone

Give yourself up to the dead leaves

and bare branches as you did all of spring

Everyone knows you came late

with your light ladled breezes

and catastrophic coughing spouts

under striped stormy grays and humidity hazes

But leave us to Autumn, she does not come

as suddenly-spurred as you—all too hot

so all we long for the cold when

your greenest woods beckon our sandaled feet

on browning beaches with ever-dirtied seas

Get out and be gone and try to come on time

next time and every time. Don't over-stay

and don't let Fall under-stay. Let her in

It's time to wash away, go drown

Go drown in your pretty pontoon-lake

What is it about your walls?

What is it about your walls?

that hold me so like blistered hands

I covered paint with crayon sores

Still you are my tiny land

What is it about your boxes and shelves?

Encased in a cold, storage room

The garage closing without its cars

is empty because we're leaving soon

What is it about your warm entryway?

That sits next to a green washroom

and a coat closet flooded with shoes

The nice ones that we never used

What is it about your wooden boards?

that lead to chairs and long tables

That aren't old enough to creak yet

but shake beneath weight, unstable

What is it about your warm light houses?

that hover above the kitchen island

glittering down on a little plate

a snack upon the dry land

What is it about your many cabinets?

The ones I've never climbed or fit inside

The ones that slam without a warning

The ones the dogs always get inside

What is it about your green, nailed paint?

that holds up our favorite pictures of us

Or shelves of books that I've never read

Where the windows send down beams of dust

What is it about your empty yellow?

The one with a tiny book case

For so long, no table, just a carpet

Under a chandelier out of place

What is it about your big, square eyes?

The windows I *can* fit inside

The ones I sneak into from outside

The ones I stare out of when school's arrived

What is it about your carpeted mountain?

that leads to another lofty hall?

The stair steps under white railings

that block out names when parents call

What is it about your master room?

The one in which my parents sleep

Their bathroom boasts a purple splendor

Something Mom likes to remember

What is it about your bluest room?

The one where my brother keeps his toys

in organized boxes and out of place—

a wardrobe from when Dad was a boy

What is it about your echo chamber?

the only bedroom with a wooden floor

The carpet made my sister sick

It made you prettier than before

What is it about your prettiest room?

My sister decorated your hand like that

With nail polish and rings and glitter

The place I slept and the place I packed

What is it about your underground?

Beneath the pipes and thick in shadows?

Beneath shattered bulbs and under the eye

of watchful spiders living in windows

What is it about your two green yards?

The ones that our dogs made their home

The ones we were supposed to play in

but we were too old and left it alone

What is it about your walls?

We moved away, yet you call us back

We'll drive past, under gaze of new curtains

What is it about your sweet home song?