

Body

The last time I held a hand it was my mom's in a Walmart parking lot. Walmart is as American as blue-collar labor. Your angry fingers choking mine; flee or fly, I am anchored and featherless.

Erasure is family history the way missile-white dunes are vaporized by desert winds. In a kiln, glass crystalizes the same way a crematorium strips bones: sand and body emerge colorless.

Jicama is a vegetable my grandmother fed to me like fruit and I want to share the taste of her fingers with you in a language I can't speak. Mouth wide, birdlike, your tongue scooping flesh.

I think about T.R. Hummer and the silo boy all the time; I think about vomiting golden grain into your guitar, taking you to a family funeral to hear mariachi—dancing cumbia drunk and bootless.

I will never accept hospital bills consummated in ripped perineum. Thirty is not your epitaph. In bed we can imagine I have swallowed the baby in the king's cake, a party for the faithless.

A child born is a hole in the ground. Grief is a recitation of the rosary in virgin tongue. Blush on a corpse. Skin against wood blends border-dirt brown. Saturday best, wasted on the sightless.

Familiar, like calling up ex lovers. Say my name in bed, say *Lyss*, but say it disappointed, over the phone, we're breaking up, and I'll hear *Less*, in the way a miscarriage is less.