

Anxiety

The world is going to die at my door tomorrow.
I'm sure of it.
Or if not tomorrow, then the next day.
Someday,
Someday soon,
Everything as I know it is going to fall apart.
I'm waiting.

—*Ruksana Kabealo*

Irreducible

I'm not good at writing these kinds of things
Because nothing I say feels like enough

I can't just say how I love your laugh
Even though it's the most adorable thing in the world
And I would make weird angles in parking lots
In the dead of winter
Just to walk with you a little longer

I can't just say how I love your eyes
And how they shine
They don't just reflect the light
They shine with this warmth of their own
How they're a deep green
With shoots of brown reaching out from the centers
Like a firework exploding behind each pupil
But sometimes they're different colors altogether
and I still don't understand how that works.

I can't just say how much I love the way you look at the world
How you can care about something so deeply
That just talking about it changes you
You get this gleam in your eyes, this intensity to your voice
And I could listen to you forever

How, for you, it's not a matter of whether there's
good left on this earth
It's just a matter of finding it

Or how much I love every inch of your skin
Scars included

I can't just tell you those things
Because they aren't enough
They're just a various assortment of details
Small pieces of an infinite portrait
They're not you
You are you
And my words can't do you justice

You defy language
You defy any attempt to capture your essence
I can't put pen to paper and capture this feeling
I get in my chest whenever I think of you
Believe me, I've tried

I'm not good at writing these kinds of things
Because you are not reducible to any body part,
any moment in time,
any smile
No matter how great
You are you
And I love you

—*Ruksana Kabealo*

An Ode to the Boy in Dark Blue Jeans on the Pink Kawasaki Ninja 300

The speed limit on my street is 35mph
You race down it at double that, easy
I can hear the roar of your bike's engine a full mile before I can even see your
frame on the horizon
Its summer
Mid-July, in fact
The asphalt radiates heat in waves
Bathing everything in shimmering air
You're no exception
When I first saw you
I thought you were a mirage
Nothing so bold and loud has passed through this sleepy southern town in ages

But I knew from the disgruntled faces of reproachful neighbors
Momentarily stirred to life by the noise
That you were, indeed, real
When you take that hairpin turn at the end of the road
The one with a posted speed of 15mph
The one with numerous petitions to be rebuilt
The one with the wall that, by the end of the summer, will be covered in different
colors of paint
Each color representing a car it's claimed
You don't slow down
You don't even think about slowing down
You accelerate
Like your life depends on it
My mother,
Standing at the kitchen window,
Clucks her tongue in disapproval every time she sees you pass by
"What in God's name is that boy thinking? He's going to get himself killed!"
But I know what you're thinking
I want to get out of here as fast as I can too
I want to speed through this small town until it blurs together before my eyes too
I understand
You're punching it like an astronaut escaping Earth's gravity
Helmet on, leaning forward
Needing that extra speed to get across this city limit
Before you become trapped here like the rest of us
Sucked in by the horrible force that is habit
You weren't meant for this mediocrity
You were meant for greatness,
And you're going to achieve it
Or die trying...
Every time you take that turn at the end of the road
After you're out of sight
I listen for that fading rumble
Just to make sure you've made it across alive
I am your mission control
If I can't get outta here,
At least I can watch you try

—*Ruksana Kabealo*