

## brushstrokes

You always wore your shoes inside the house but you refused to wear them in the yard. Though I had a fear of you always stepping on my toes, adapting the habit of wearing flats in the house to protect myself, I let other parts of my body grow vulnerable. When the strap of my dress would start to fall down my shoulder, I made sure you could see. When I felt my skirt rise up when I stood from my seat at my writing desk, I invited you to peak. If my shirt rose up when I stretched after we finished a double feature of old Hollywood films, I would grin to myself as my lower breasts exposed themselves to you. After all, I am the incarnation of all the melodic notes you've plucked on your piano. Of all the Romantic paintings you've created, I am the only tangible soul in the whole world that knows your name better than yourself.

*—Amber Alexander*