

KATIE J. ARMSTRONG

BIRD

My body's made drastic sacrifices.
A wildfire
Spreading in my veins
I let you burn me with the idea of
 knowing you will one day
Make it to my heart.
And from there,
Our fuses would ignite...
But I'm coated in the aftermath.
A sledgehammer to the bone,
I'm turning bruises
Into reasons why I've messed up,
Bad days
Into my own faults.
Frosting from my cupcake pupils give
Eskimo kisses to
Sequence beads that
Peck my waistline gently.
Chain link fence lips unwind at abandon
 playgrounds
For they wish to tempt your boundaries.
Strapped in my invisible suffocating corset,
I want you to wave a filthy white flag
Of guilt
For never letting me into your head.
Rubble and ash are retreating shooting
 stars and
Hug your jacket,
A thin cursive sorry,
For never being a good enough reason
 to explain why your heart beats
 as hard as it does some days.
The enigmatic flower tucked behind my ear
Has tender petals
Whose pollen plants my precious
 seed, in what I hope to be
The soil of your future.
Walking in a black, sweetheart dress
I bloom while my smile blushes back
Teasing the buttons of my dimples who
 always know the best ways to beam.

Putting mile markers between us,
A voluntary prison,
You're giving time to a more fascinating failure
Which would explain
Why you never give your smile back to me.
Strands of my hair never unbuckle from
Your Jeeps head rest;
My place being the
Passenger side of your car.
They bend into an outline of a heart that's
 doing alright
...and drive away with you.
From this, I know I'll be there
Even when I'm far from.
My fingertip's imaginations tap with the back
 of your gorgeous face to me
They tremble with eagerness to trace your spine
Jagged bark all too young
So I can understand how rough
 you've really had it.
Your scars will never break seal and tell me
What each stitch was for.
I want to heal where it still aches like the pain of
Digesting quarters.
Carry you from the bathtub, to the solution...
Anywhere but the floor.
And show you your dreams
Of things getting a little better,
Prayers with answers,
Days with happiness we can share like...
Peach tea.
My lips peel like onions for everyday they
 don't get a taste of your Burt's Bees.
I've planned approaches
I've seen played out in my head,
But I keep picturing you'll flash those
 lovely eyes I wish to have as my own
At someone else.
I've seen you leave me before.
I've worked with this, my own
 personal witness protection program...

If all I see of you is back jean pockets
Where my hands slipped out of light
Like the sapphire Rose let the black ocean
 add to its mysterious abyss,
I would kiss the small of your neck
Twice
In hopes of leaving an impression
So that I know I will always
 be in the back of your mind,
I will always be the Titanic
With my place in your history book.
But I get what I deserve;
I'm the weed in your garden.
Not the kind that takes you high
But the type to take you low
 and bring your palms to the clouds.
I know you need rain
And lately, the thunderstorms
 that keep you inside have been tears...
Those belong to me.
I've seen you where the tough times grow
Stretched out to tangle with your roots,
But couldn't help tracing your being
 with my own personal Pixie dust
On the days we pretended I could
 make you fly.
Those bones in your back
Shaped like wings
Are exactly why I've nicknamed you bird.
When we spent summer sunsets in hayfields
Pretending to take off like airplanes
 and you'd hold my hips towards the sky
 as I said goodbye to the ground below;
To make believe.
I curiously imagined what you would look
 like kept in feathers;
You would look seraph in white.
With borrowed glitter from your twinkling eyes
And my gold flakes from being a young Pixie.
I know there comes a time
When a bird has to take what it's learned,

Use their wings in a life
 much need of change and recovery,
Which have been worms for me to swallow.
But I hope with what make fictitious
 stories we've made come true,
 what fantasies we live today,
That instead of flying south of the winter,
You'll fly to this street,
Where we first admitted our identities;
 Scorpio and Leo,
Where I've always walked barefoot.
Not just for the winter;
But forever.