

# NOMENCLATURE

With a mouth full of stones I thought you told me about doves instead of love, I thought the insides of our legs were bruised with fantasy fucking. Tell me, how tall are you on a planet that worships miniature horses? How clean are your armpits compared to the bum who sells eggs disguised as embryos? I collected your sweat in buckets. When I water the flowers with it your eyes grow crooked from the vines. Tell me you are not spying on me this very second. Tell me you have not memorized my nipples mnemonically: nimble nose, number none. I'd let you cut my lips off with your teeth if I didn't fear medieval infections that would scare the pants off of modern medicine. The hearth is hot with unintentional fire and I am waiting naked by the door. The spaces you are trying to get into are reading books about faithlessness and disease.

# MANIFEST

Sometimes I can peel your footprints off the floor, which means you are leaving for good. When I fell in love with you, the windows were dirty. Which means I should have known. You paid an apparition to say my name and every time I said *Oh, you*. Sometimes I am a woman on a subway trying to go anywhere but home. Sometimes I am so small my obituary starts and ends with *she*. On my way to the stove, I think about god. How proud he must have been when he made the egg. As I crack my head open on the kitchen floor, I remember the way you looked through the window: ash dark cloud trailing a flame.

# IT'S UP TO YOU, NEW YORK

If my fortune cookie said *New York is a runaway bride and you are an island* I would pack my nightgowns and find a new man to love. But the train ride from Long Beach to Penn Station is another prepared piano whose song I'll never understand. If we were metal objects fixed to something beautiful we might be able to define our strange longings as a leper's torn stockings: a gruesome gaping. Pennies are useless when it comes to buying happiness. It is all gold and silver. Happiness is a weighted currency. I do not know how to love strange men except when they are floating dead in a motel pool. In which case I light candles and say, *There were too many secrets between us, there was so much we hadn't done*. New York has been reading trash magazines from its own newsstands and is concerned with its weight, thinks *Good things never come to those who weigh*. "Making it" means tossing buildings and people into the ocean like pennies. It means forfeiting a wish in favor of a little more light. I've learned that running away means getting mistaken for an airplane about to land. It means people looking at you like a screen that says *Delayed Delayed Delayed*. I know that love sells its real autograph on street corners across the country. Now that New York and I have resigned from the office of Bodies That Hold, we can both wait in love's line to be signed, to be the ones held.

# NOTHING SHOCKING

A functioning alcoholic, the neighbor fills all the puddles with fish and then drinks from them, coyly. He says he is always thirsty, his condition somewhere between biological and hermetic. After running through parking lots barefoot, I drink a gallon of cherry juice and instantly bloat. That night, I dream about pits and their clever way of delivering small messages. The puddle in front of our house is creating its own weather system. I don't feel honored. It has been raining brown for days and every time I try to speak to the mirror about unreliable narrators, I feel drunk. I've fallen down the stairs and broken every rib. My dream of being a human xylophone is over. After we've cooked all the fish, there is no sound, no one is hungry. This might be classified in a medical dictionary somewhere between despair and homesickness. When I have trouble falling asleep, I move my mind's fish eyes around like abacus beads. Every song I've loved has been sung by a man with parenthetical eyes. Between me and you, I despise the sunrise. At high tide, the fish blow perfect bubbles full of nothing.