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## The Loneliness of My Brother

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## THE LONELINESS OF MY BROTHER

1

This is the loneliness of my brother.

Today I saw a woman sitting alone laughing at what she held in  
her glass.

My brother laughs behind a closed door alone in a room.

This is the loneliness of my brother. I dreamt we quarreled.

I picked him up and beat him against a brick wall until all that  
was left was a pair of pants.

This, too, is the loneliness of my brother. I dreamt he was a  
boy, drunk,

laughing and stumbling against me. I held him in my hands. He  
became a rabbit made of ice.

I dropped him on the sidewalk and he melted into a pool of water.

How, I asked, can I tell our mother?

I see him in the faces of transient men.

I see him in the fearful eyes of boys.

I see him in my eyelids and muscles.

I understand he is almost entirely alone.

Imagine the loneliness of living on in the dream of your sister.

A rabbit of ice, a pair of empty pants.

I understand almost nothing about him. He keeps secrets.

The only time he wants to talk about anything personal is  
when he's drinking.

Our last conversation he asked me if I'd considered suicide.

This from the man who gets a pistol in his hand and plays roulette.

Passes out on his desk at work with the gun in his grip.

Police break down the door. Everyone thought he was dead.

Lay on my parents' bed shooting holes in the walls and ceiling.

This is the loneliness of the one who laughs alone.

The woman looked like my brother, propped on the street-  
reverend's arm,  
faded tattoos, red lips and blonde straggled hair. So pleased  
with everything

she laughed herself cross-eyed. Pulled way inside and shrunk  
into a ball.  
On a shelf called emotion stands a frozen figure. Vomiting smoke.

Something flies into my house. Black feathers drift.  
I call the dogs in and go looking.  
In the silence of the fiddlehead and forsythia I look for the body.  
Broken neck, I imagine. Tiny bones, eggshell skull. But nothing  
is there.

My mother told me that a bird flying into a window is a  
harbinger of death.  
A black bird, she said, will throw itself at your house.  
I used to fight for intervention and de-tox. Now I only wait.

2

All I know is the summer went by.  
Suddenly the leaves are reddening.  
Ran into a local poet who referred  
to this suddenness and deepening  
as *the August singularity* then he  
snaked his arm around my waist &  
grinned.  
Next night the meteorologist refers  
to these brisk evenings as the *third  
week anomaly* while I wonder if my  
tomatoes will succeed at presenting  
killer fruit red as shark's happiness.  
The fair is over.  
That black and white cat is back at  
the gate. She makes herself flat and  
slips underneath. Two big dogs live  
at my house. She will risk her life for  
curiosity.  
Or maybe something winged lies hurt  
in my deep grass.