

## Low/lone tide

How did we get here?

Cigarette parachuting linen sheets, a claustrophobic canopy,

*I wouldn't mind if you cried quieter.*

You ran with my jokes, (back then, anyhow),

I thought, pink cheeked and tongue tied,

*run with me, please, run to me, let's run away.*

Run the low purr and warped yellow of your scarlet-shocked car,

warped bloody, dappled in amber streetlights that haloed your face, setting cherub curls aflame,

and I thought,

Church carpet burns and mock-gold chain heavy against my collar,  
praying to a riddle serving tear tracks for the congregation;

I'd do it all if it were you at the pulpit.

Stained glass-carved eyes,

tangerine orange and knotweed leaves under sunlight.

The holy grail is delicately discovered in your cupid's bow,

the plum-bitten shade of your bottom lip,

crescent moon scar on your chin.

I grow my nails out long, thinking,

I'll dig them in and

*you can't leave, don't leave, please.*

As of late, I brandish clippers to my thyroid, and you watch, disappointed deity,  
but my hands come back rust-caked, shaking,

stinging the raw skin of hangnails, caking into the lines of my fingers,

always been too short, grasping uselessly in mirage's wake.

Blood's cascade over splintered fingertips are calendar red,

through months the distant illusion of change, rotten fruit and sterling mirrors,

Cherry to plum, eerily akin to an overripe peach-

sickly, the colour of cherub curls, curdling bile against my throat,

the sharp sting of a paper-cut, and it's supersaturated, nauseating,

This despairing passage of time.

I focus on your laugh, wind-chimes over the hill,

The joke is funny, and I laugh, of course (friends do that),

but I miss flipped palms,

cherries laced thrice with spider web,

and I know about quelling my fires,

soothing pink with gauze because I have learned about my forked tongue,

but the girl who speaks as though drowned, keens waterlogged in my ear-

*Am I still your best friend? Please don't forget me, not again.*

*Why don't we talk anymore?*

*Why-*

A banshee range, twinned delirium, desperation.  
Difficult for another tone to suffocate the infinite,  
though there are no sound-waves to crash against her,  
Sea irises unreadable.

*Do you still like me?*

It's awkward to ask.  
Damp fingers cover mine, coaxing flame into soothing,  
salt shore retreats from chartreuse, yet she never quiets.

*Be less. Be less. Be less.*

I know you've seen her, flashes of seaweed.  
But the ocean never strays, thus she expects return.  
Water warps my glasses and they only mirror,  
Fruit goes awfully distorted in salt water, shrivelling identical,  
no more than still-failing fingers grasping for cherry stems.

*Look what you did, look what you did.*

She is every myth of the sea- screaming banshee, mournful woman,  
Scylla's many tongues, siren persuasion, we wander Calypso's hand in hand.  
Circe's illusion, your Ashray, my selkie, her coat cracking matchsticks,  
*I've always been afraid of the ocean.*