

anatomy

- i. as much as i did not ask for this body, i have to remember that it didn't ask for me either. that it didn't ask for me to wake up every morning and pray for another miracle, to be poked and prodded by doctors like a metaphor, to be denied the very things that keep a body alive. i would apologize if it wasn't always hurting me back.
- ii. when i go to church, they ask to pray for me. i say yes, because it's easier than explaining that the miracle is already over, that i have already died once, that the chance i'd make it this far was one in infinity, that i could never be lucky enough to be the recipient of divine intervention two times over. but i let them, because it won't hurt anything. because i love them. because maybe if they pray for healing enough, i'll deserve it.
- iii. there are days that i try to keep my eyes closed because i remember that my body doesn't fit. these are most days. it's more than just the ache—the symptoms, it's the feeling of living in a body that has always been too tight. call it claustrophobia. call it unrealistic expectations. call it a side effect. call it what you will, but my faith is making it do cartwheels to prove it deserves to stay. to prove it was ever there at all.
- iv. i love so many people who i'm going to disappoint. i can't be holy in their eyes and myself in the mirror—there's just no room for me here.
- v. every poem about my body always ends up about something else. maybe that's a metaphor, too—the way i view my body always ends up involving everyone but me. maybe poems about my body would be more consistent if i could be selfish for five stanzas. maybe selfish isn't the right word, but i don't think there is one.

Self Baptism

imagine him sitting in a bathtub. the room is so full
of steam he can almost feel it condense in his throat,
drip down his windpipe, leak into his lungs.
he wonders if that's why his chest is so heavy.
he wonders if he'll cough up holy water in the morning.
he wonders if this will help at all.

he tries to fall asleep in the tub, warm water clinging
to the back of his throat. sweat or condensation or tears
drip down his face, but he's too busy not
opening his eyes to make the distinction. something aches,
probably his neck from spending too much time
leaning backward. he tries to dream of himself among

beautiful people, filled with warmth and worth and water.
he tries to dream of himself as one of them,
but sleep doesn't come, and dreams aren't something he
ever got to choose for himself. if they were, they'd be beautiful.
he'd be beautiful. he'd be asleep by now. he'd be saved.
he'd be coughing up holy water.

the art of healing

Give me the sun, let it
*paint my melancholy soul
with green and gold—*

Heal me.
*turn these colors into lights,
a sweet, gleaming aurora and*

Give me back to the Earth,
*let it teach me how to heal myself.
let it teach me how to love healing—*

Let healing be the last thing I do for both of us.
*lovely, teach me how to paint
with light instead of pigment;*

Give me the rain,
*let it turn my melancholy soul
into something beautiful*

So my edges might swim again.