

every single weekend

every single weekend i pass the cozy corner cafe when i leave home to go back to the house; do you remember the food? black coffee stained napkins and buttered toast separating us at a table for four, but there was just us two (two *not* three); there was never three when it came to us; what was it? ten years earlier it became us vs. them; ten years since we sat at a table for *three* because mom was sick of your shit about a decade ago; let's not discredit the tables of four though, marquelle and her daughter i can't even remember the name of; *that's not how family is supposed to be*; or the table of five from the girl you dated with two daughters whose names i can't recall but live in the memory only because of their astonishingly enchanting rooms (with two large spiral staircases leading up to each, one on the left side ornamented with nothing other than the color purple while the right side was filled to the ceiling with hues of pink); *"do you want to sleep in the pink room or the purple room?" / the pink room, of course! I'll sleep in the purple one next weekend!"*; we never saw them again. we changed houses every single weekend, *that's not how family is supposed to be*; but then we found that table of seven. not to dismiss all those before and after but them, they might just be the most important ones. that table with me and you being the "other" in a *real family*. but no need to be intimidated by them because their dad got kicked out just like mine; *i bet their dad brings them to different girls houses on his weekends too*; and you see, that was nice; swing sets and dolls for a year with a little sister that loved me like her own; then we left but then we went back but then we left again and then we went back one last time and later...well then we left for good. i see you and them in everything, unfortunately; because she had a season pass to michigan's adventure and i know you've never seen that funny uniform i have to wear, but she has; and the summer before when my friend needed a ride home he lives in the same trailer park that we did with them in that last year. when i see my mom i don't feel a rock in my throat or a punch in the stomach so why does *she* get to come to my job and make me feel like that? *that's NOT how family is supposed to be*; i hear *"your fathers a fucking asshole"* with the sound of tears drowning out the country radio station all over again everytime i see her in deep purple sweaters; now i bet you don't even remember this one, that time we were leaving the carnival with you in shotgun and me and chloe in the backseat thinking that car was genuinely about to go into the other lane; *"you're a wreck"* you sighed; *please just validate her for once, we're all gonna die if you dont*; and you see, what it made it worse was i knew that american dream that we never had; that nice house with married parents and two kids (one boy, one girl); and i knew that all too well because you know my best friend (that girl with brown hair who'd drive with my grandpa every weekend to pick me up – from every new house we landed at – every sunday because sometimes we'd all go get tacos together) well she had that life and you reminded me *every. single. weekend.* that it wouldn't be us, it wouldn't be me. as time goes on i appreciate your absence because now i see you only when i want to and when i know where you're living and that you have a good job. now i can associate city lights with your name (along with the white sox, milwaukee st, and insanely delicious cookies that we get every night i make it to the city) and as time goes on i see that her life doesn't have to be mine, so i'll begin again