

Getting over

2011

In the morning
you will wake up shivering
where he slipped from your body
like a sheet you kicked off.

Get up before the alarm.
Walk down the hall touching
the bumps in the wallpaper.
Remind yourself how it feels
to touch anything but him.

There are some places you can never go back to.
Cross out Ithaca on the map.
Forget the geography you used to know by heart.
Instead,
spend all day riding the subway
and remember how much he hated it.

Stop thinking of him every time you see pine trees.
That's stupid.
They have trees everywhere.

Delete the weather from his town off your phone,
Throw his shirts out the window,
Destroy everything that used to feel like home.

Burn your photos.
Throwing them away will not do it.
Be cruel.
It will make you feel powerful again,

it won't make him less gone.

When order your favorite drink at the bar,
Forget how you only fell in love with it when he made it for you.
Claim it as your own.
Take credit for everything he gave you.
Tell his jokes.
Flirt with everyone pretty.

The first man you go home with will sting
like a splinter going in.
You will say the wrong name without realizing.

Did you forget?
Your body is a postcard that's already been signed.
You're still waiting
for the features to morph into his.
You will close your eyes and see
the wall behind his bed
and his nails digging into your thighs.
You will hear him breathing in your ear,
Your name,
like the only prayer he ever thought would be answered
Your name.

It's just a word.

Stop wondering if he thinks of you when he hears it.

Stop asking yourself questions like:
Does he wake up still thinking I might be there?
Does he still wear earrings in his left ear?
Will the next girl kiss them like I did?
Do they still taste like me?

The answer will never be No.
That doesn't mean he is ever coming back.

He is a question you will never stop asking.
You will glance over your shoulder
for reasons you can't name.
He is a landscape in your rearview mirror.

It gets further each day.

You'll forget the way he drank his coffee.
You won't know what cologne he wore.
Nothing will smell like him.

The news that he's in town
will blow past you like dead leaves.
You'll drive by his house without slowing down.
One day, it will just be over.

This is not a moment to grieve.
Think of lighting a candle to Saint Christopher
the patron saint of travelers and floods.
Listen to the rain.
Listen to how everything is yours again.