translation

Your words
Like whispers
I quietly listen
To each syllable
As the story unfolds
Speak to me
In a language
All our own

panic attack

Can you remember the moment
before the last second that you lost control
when your heartbeat quickened
with anticipation and your composure
was compromised
no longer steadfast or coherent,
the heaving sound of
your own exasperated breath
seems to fill the room
which is getting smaller
and smaller
and smaller
by the minute?

Can you remember the moment
you made the choice
(or the choice made you)
made the decision
to turn away from
rational thinking
abandon reason and allow yourself
to just react
ignoring any and all consequences?

Can you remember the moment
when anger consumed you
disguising itself to flow
through your veins like
platelets becoming a catalyst
causing your blood to burn
the inside of your own flesh
igniting a fire inside the innermost part?

Can you remember the moment
before the last second
that you lost it all?

**before, after, before**

opening up
a blossom curls
cautious
discrete
affair of the heart
starts slowly
yet
yearning
cannot
seem
to wait
or
stop
am I wrong

right for wanting
knowing
the possibilities
of you
and I
neither, nor
but
once
delicate petals fall
down from the dew and the reality of the morn’ after is clear and too heavy for me.

daydreaming

While you slept I watched your eyelids dance, were you dreaming of me?

when you leave . . .

It happens when you leave I see your shadow on the wall I hear the echo of your footsteps Creak, creak, creak across the floor When you leave My mouth My fingers They yearn to touch you It happens when you leave I run my hand over the imprint left on my pillow
And inhale the scent of you that lingers on my sheets
And my legs wrap around them
I remember the warmth of your hands on
the small of my back
And the curve of your lips . . .
The kiss
you left on my forehead
It happens most times
When you leave.

**close**

When two bodies connect
like puzzle pieces fitting together
It is that heat
It’s that damn body heat

When my back seems to
and your chest seems to
become continuous into one another

Like an ellipsis at the end of a line
I pause with staccato breaths
in, out, in, out, in

My heart beats then
your heart beats in rhythm

I don’t know where you end
or I begin

That’s what happens
That is the moment
*When we are close.*
amnesia

I don’t quite remember the weather that afternoon in August
I don’t know what time it was
or what I wore
when I said goodbye

I remember your face
I can see your eyes
the way they looked at me
when I said goodbye

I did not know that it was final
I couldn’t have known
that it really was the end
for you and I, my lover, my best friend

Nothing particular about the weather
or the day
or the hour

All I can remember is the moment
when I said goodbye
before I was ready to let us end.

too often . . .

Too often we . . .
. . . hug but not hold
. . . thank but not appreciate
. . . look but not really see
how someone’s presence in our lives
is irreplaceable until the moment
when that presence is gone
Too often we . . .
. . . touch but do not feel
. . . listen but do not hear

Too often we . . .
. . . give begrudgingly
. . . take thoughtlessly

We are selfish in sharing
—our minds
—our spirits
—our hearts
—our thoughts
—our strengths
—our weaknesses
for fear we be judged
or that they may be devalued by exposure to others

So we learn without knowing
and praise without honoring

And in this time of disposable lifestyles
too often we . . .
fail to cherish the beauty of simple love,
lasting friendships
and of knowing that each person
we encounter is an intricate part
of the fabric of our lives.

Karen Ballard