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Groundhog Poetry

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How can you write so many stories about the same people?
How can you craft so many verses about one or another day,
and each one seem new?

Well: some things you don’t run out of thoughts for.
Some things, like a boomerang, haunt.

There are so many angles to torturing yourself.
Poem: how the night started. The willow tree. The moon. The kiss.

Here is a poem, I could write a dozen verses for just three lines:
—Why won’t you?
—I’m fifteen.
—So?

Here is a poem:
—I did that for you, so you owe it to me to touch me too.
Writing about biting back what I’d wanted to say, which was:
—I didn’t want you to.
Here is a poem:
When will I stop remembering this?

Here is a poem:
Why did I forgive him?

Here is a poem about the concept of virginity.
Here is a poem about whether it’s really rape if you say ‘But,’ if you say ‘I don’t want to,’ but you
don’t say ‘No.’
Here is a poem about a park bench and sitting on him to stay warm.
Here is a poem about why did I wear a skirt that night? About remembering my long
socks and
thick tights.

That’s only one eve’s worth of poems. That’s not even the whole night.

Here is a poem about the teenagers at the community center, and steamed windows.
Here is a poem about the bark beneath the playground, and wishing boys knew what to do with their fingers.
Here is a poem about out-of-town texts on the phone bill, and printed out IMs that I read at parties. Here is a poem about phone sex, and, while we’re at it, another poem about whether it’s really rape if you’ve had phone sex with consent.

There are so many poems I could have written instead. Poems about an insomniac loving a narcoleptic. Poems about the first boy who wrote me a song. Poems about a family on the train tracks in a bad town, with too many brothers, too many bruises; I could have written a thousand poems from there. I could have written about two last names, and the first name from his hated father. It would have started something like, *I didn’t know what names to write on the envelope I sent him,* *except for the street: Cherry Lane.*

But Cherry Lane doesn’t bring much back for me. Neither does his Alkaline Trio t-shirt, which I had conquered my dislike of scent for, learning to appreciate the tickle of his cologne. My kindergarten best friend meeting him beneath the Town Center clock tower.
I don't remember what the ring looked like, just that it was delicate.
There will be no poems about that.

Oh, long-lost lover, if only you knew I'd write so many poems about you.
If only you knew they'd all be the same:

swingsets,
  a pleated skirt,
  your old car,
  a dewy bench,
the willow tree,
kneeling on asphalt,
  your whispered voice,
  the taste of salt,
  numb legs,
cold air,
midnight.