

for James

Alexander Perez

you left me in the future,
taken away another yesterday with you.
first there will be no leftovers,
but i will look in the icebox
expecting it to be full with your love.
hungry, i will slowly close the door.
there will be no new handsome clothes
fresh from your favorite store,
so i will put on your bahama shirts,
one by one,
to feel myself inside you.
there will be no use for your medicines,
but i will keep the bottles to shake
to think how many days
you might have had left to take what remains,
but no more nights to remind you
not to go to sleep and forget.
there will be no fish to catch,
but i will leave your reels
in the corner,
then cast your ashes to the river,

watching until they go under.
there will be no vacations to take,
so i will stay at home,
look at the pictures
of the rusting mountains,
rumpled ocean waves.
there will be no day
because you will not ask me how it was.
there will be nightmares never ending
without you to shake me awake.
there will be problems
without a problem solver.
wounds without a nurse.
worries without a comforting word.
there will be no one's back to scratch
with the tattoo of a compass
to show me the way.
there will be your bowling trophy
high up on the shelf,
but no more strikes, no more spares,
no more celebrations.
there will be no more jokes between us,
but i will sit laughing to myself in the corner.
the cat will fill your empty space,
sense you there,

and i will wish i were a cat
so that i couldn't lose your scent,
but i will sleep on your pillow
until my dreams smell like something
indescribable, known only to me.
i will spend all winter sitting in your chair,
watching your birds after the feeder is full,
knowing that would make you happy.
but there will be no new poems.
i will shred all the old
(thank you for your three little words)
because they were written for you.
the first to go will be the last.
and when tomorrow comes,
and i've burnt the last of your candles,
there will be no time to spend
because i do not know
how to spend time
unless it is with you.

irreparable

Alexander Perez

you patch up
my broken promises,
like figurines,
put them up
on a special shelf.
the shelf is full,
weighted down.
i wait for it to fall,
for the promises
to break all over,
irrecoverable.
but you will stoop down
to the floor,
to search for the shards.
you will glue them all together
the best you can
even though
all the old promises
will come out misshapen.
you could sweep them instead,
into a pile, sweep them away

out the door,
outside our house
where i sit thinking on the stairs
what to say,
hoping you still believe
i love you,
knowing you do not believe
anything else is true.
i'm carrying another promise
in my hand,
a small broken lovebird,
a sacrifice for you.
you will take it in,
attempt to piece it back together
until you cannot hold it anymore,
your fingertips pierced
with invisible glass slivers,
pieces of the bird
that can never be restored.
when it fell from its nest,
wings too tired to fly
i heard it sing
one last time a song
i didn't know was pain.
until i heard you

humming it to yourself
as you walked away
putting the bird
up on the shelf
making room for more.