

## THE STORY IN WHICH YOU ARE A KNIFE

The therapist recommends going for drives. *Nothing is as truly bad as it seems if you can get some distance from it.* I agree, but worry about smashing into conveniently placed oaks or the random robust pine or finding the faulty portion of bridge railing and sailing out into the night, the ocean, the blackness.

The Boy calls and insists on dinner and a movie. So we go to Red Lobster, and eat Mediterranean herbed shrimp & fish.

I blush. He notices. He laughs.

I try to change the subject.

The waitress blushes, and brings us warm cheddar biscuits.

The movie is the new X-men deal.

The movie is two hours of explosions & predictability.

The movie is all high octane testosterone self-love.

I can't stop thinking about Wolverine. How his power isn't his claws or strength, but the ability to heal. I rub my shirt sleeve at the wrist—

I marvel at how things

heal: keloidial, bright red like Kabala string or the gills of the bass my father hung above our television.

You're being obnoxious again.

You won't stop talking.

*He's a traitor. We should take another shower*

*together—jealousy—that'd teach him.*

I consider tossing you out the window; you

aren't really the problem. I consider tossing myself out the window.

I tell you I've been sleeping with the belt looped around my neck. This makes you jealous.

You finally stop talking.

On the night in question I was thinking of violinists.

When I think about violinists I think about my grandfather who poured small glasses of scotch and sipped them while bowing his ancient instrument.

On the night in question I did more than sip.

I ran the shower hot. I climbed in. I brought you with me, and we played until my arm became a big mouthed bass. I submerged the fish and let it swim—the gills opening & closing with every pulse. I wanted to be that small, to swim, to sink—

to be caught and mercifully released.

On the night in question The Boy was kind enough to drive me to Kroger to buy bandages & Neosporin and ice cream & chocolates, because *chocolates make everyone feel better*.

Everything was life through a wide angle lens. I expected a soundtrack or a voice over: *he felt strangely fine despite the blood seeping into the left sleeve of his black hoodie. He wanted pork chops & sauerkraut. He remembered he needed Tylenol & toilet paper. . . .*

At the end of the night in question The Boy smeared the fish with Neosporin and wrapped it in gauze.

When the therapist asks why I love The Boy I tell the therapist this: *he's magic—when we embrace he makes the entire world disappear. When we embrace, I feel safe.*

I don't tell the therapist about your touch. I don't want to be carted off.

The Boy stays with me every night for a week. He debones, smears, and wraps the fish nightly.

He fills me with apple juice, Fruit Loops, & a funny queasiness—

like riding the tea cups.

The Boy stops staying.

I feel good

until blood comes seeping from under the bandages and pools in my left palm.

This nurse I know, says I probably need stitches. He's probably right.  
But I won't go to the hospital  
    (jackets & cells—a lineage of padded rooms hanging over me like  
the guillotine's blade.

You're a Rachel Ray edition all purpose kitchen knife.

You're a shark I stole from the Atlanta aquarium.

You're the boogey man I created twenty-five years ago.

You're a face wearing a mask on a wall wearing a mirror.

When the therapist asks why I love you I tell him this:

*when he touches  
me everything else disappears; there is nothing else in the world.*

The therapist recommends meditation. *What*, he asks, *would Buddha do?*

The therapist doesn't get it.

*It's all about touch with you, isn't it?*

Maybe the therapist gets it.

I awake, many mornings, to find the bass flapping beside me.  
I fear the worst,

but I don't stop. I don't turn into vapor or the smudged face in a  
family photo album.