

## *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*