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Category: Poetry

A Few Circles of Grief

001. you're really going to leave me here?
chasing, aimless,
skinned knees and creaking bones,
a little too young and a little too old
can't do anything but hold myself to the crumbling dirt as everything goes and goes—

002. if not betrayal then what was it?
and how am i supposed to know when still
i barely reach the countertops;
stop! this has gone on for too long and still
can't wash the blood off my hands—
too young—
too young to understand
but not too young to trace every teardrop down your face
the stitches and IV and still not knowing—

003. besides the sudden bruises, the hospital gown, the falling hair
like darkened silk bedsheets,
still a crinkle and a smile and a promise—
said you'd get better by my birthday!

004. until you didn't.
and suddenly the tombstones were clearer than your sickly face,
pale and jagged like the crescent moon—
all wrong wrong wrong,
ends reaching, stretching so far and still too short—
trying so hard—not enough!
and still i don't know why.

005. so i made the executive decision to stop wondering.
didn't see you for two months so who's there to stop me.
thought i understood what it meant to be gone because you *were*—

01. until you weren't
until the garage opened and you materialized from your deathbed
and still i don't get it.
in my mind i took you to the cemetery and walked back alone
because the pain doesn't grip so hard when i'm not there to see it,
never mind all the light my closed eyes missed.

02. i'm used to it, anyways.
i'll regret it later but no, i won't stop—

denial is the heroin i have chosen and you can't do shit about it
i don't get why you have cancer and i can't stand it—
so many things missing, missing
people and places and pieces—
can't stand losing things so none of it ever happened!
not you, not me, not the fruit cut to bite-size pieces
or the cups of cheerios
or the late afternoon sunsets and everything being okay—
missing, missing out—
and still you wouldn't let me in.
(but maybe i couldn't escape)

03. in too deep.
and so i pictured graves
and lilies blooming
and weeds and berries and poison ivy—
floating up, up, and away
and never again until the next time.
for years i sat empty and idle in this liminal space,
my very own personal infinity but—oh!
time is running out! (don't remind me)

04. so i take it all in.
wait for the drop,
for the snapped thread,
for the exhale and never come back—
the in-breath and the out-breath and then lose a little more
again—

05. it never came.
yet still, there is a museum in my head—
i mean, mausoleum—
i mean, the creak of an old floorboard,
the whisper of the curtains
a brush against the drywall—

1. or maybe it did and i didn't notice.
or maybe nothing ever happened at all.
you know
when i told you to get well i didn't mean eight years later
but i guess better late than never.

2. so i guess it's all over now.

3. don't know what for.

4. don't know what to do.

5. don't know why or if i'm even allowed to ask—
still waiting for you to come back.
don't know if you were ever gone in the first place.
and in the back of my head i'll always wonder if it was me who was crumbling all along.

0. restarting again. it's all i know how to do.