

IN NORTHERN MICHIGAN

La Dispute

Dream if you want for me to carry on
If you could break it all down for me
I could believe you
Dream if you want for me to carry on
If you could break it all down for me
I remember
You and I in Northern Michigan
The color in between the leaves
Black tourmaline, blue-green
Like some bioluminescent thing
Come up from the black of the sea
The purl of the breeze
Whispering
I remember
How you stood at the water's edge
While I was at the line of the trees
And you waded out patiently down
Ever-darkening your step
The shadows grew around your feet
Your ankles and knees
I remember trembling

Nights you tunneled inward
Anxious unto panic
I was that watcher on the ridge
Standing on the dune edge faced west
And the night sloped down before me
Like a challenge from myth
But I never moved an inch
Backlit by the campfire blazing
Heaving in a harsh spring wind
Sparks thrown into the low branches to fade
While you floated into water like a ghost ship
Sinking
Days we breezed through everything
Laughed through whole mornings at home
And out warm nights running from sleep
Days like good dreams always familiar, surreal
The sun in the trees bleeds marigold and wine
Life
All of its languages here
Love spoke in tongues
Loudly or hushed
Too much of you at once is just enough at all times
My life in the light of you
I remember everything

Dream if you want for me to carry on
You could be like a body in the sea
You could go slowly sink on into nothingness
Or you could float like a lantern in a breeze
You could freeze out of focus on a movie screen
Film careening from the reel
Or you could stay for an ovation
When the credits roll
Focused face right in the center of the frame
You never know

I heard the sound of my feet
Before I felt them pound sand
I heard only my own hard heartbeat in my head
There was no sound
I saw the water to your knees
Then to your neck
Above your head
I swore you'd drowned
I watched you swim out
I only watched you wade in and panicked when I lost you
Sprinting now downward to find you back
As if you even needed me or asked
Worry always myself too much for your old sadness
Worry until I panic
Tumble to the open shoreline
Kept running toward water alone
The waves against my chest deafening
Or only your soft laughter in me