

# Cartwheel

Lucy Dacus

Here and there and gone again  
Firefly juice on your skin  
You're glowing like an atom bomb  
This natural thing that you've undone  
Outgrew older sister's clothes again  
Won't admit you're growing tall and thin  
You like your body pulling at the seams  
You're not prepared for what the future brings

Curse words and empty cups  
Cracked blacktop curling up  
Heatwave by midday  
Heat lightning on a summer night  
And I remember when you used to call  
Holed up in the closet in the hall  
Scared you wouldn't live to 45  
The same age as your father when he died  
You'd say, "We need to talk  
Sneak out, meet me on your block"  
I'd sit by you, silent on the curb  
What to say when there is not a word?  
Spell broke at daybreak  
Light another candle on the cake  
Cartwheel and a broken wrist  
Skin scarred and sun-kissed

When you told me 'bout your first time  
A soccer player at the senior high  
I felt my body crumple to the floor-  
Betrayal like I'd never felt before  
I thought back to many years ago  
A late night promise on the telephone  
We'd build a house of twigs and vines  
Grow old together just to pass the time  
Now there's only past and present day  
I can't believe a word you say  
The future isn't worth its weight in gold  
The future is a benevolent black hole