

Forest Fire

Mount Eerie

The year moves on without you in it
Now it is fall without you
I had to close the windows and doors without you coming through
I kept them open for as long as I could
But the baby got cold
I watched the calendar bulldoze

This whole past summer was a lingering heatwave
And I remember late August, our open bedroom window, going through your things with the fan blowing
And the sound of helicopters, and the smell of smoke
From the forest fire that was growing, billowing just on the edge of town where we used to swim
They say a natural, cleansing devastation, burning in the understory, erasing trails, there is no end

But when I'm kneeling in the heat throwing out your underwear
The devastation is not natural or good, you do belong here
I reject nature, I disagree

In the hazy light of forest fire smoke, I looked across at the refineries and thought that the world was actually constantly ending
And the smell and roar of the asphalt truck that was idling just out the window, tearing up our street
I missed you, of course
And I remember thinking the last time it rained here you were alive still
And that this same long heat that I was in contained you
And in this same heat, I opened the window next to you on your last morning
So you could breathe, and then so you could ghost away
And now so the room will hopefully stop whispering

The grind of time I'm not keeping up with
The leaf on the ground pokes at my slumbering grief
Walking around, severed, lumbering
But slowly, sovereignty reasserts itself
I don't want it though, and betrayal whines
Who and how could I... Live?