

Ariel Lynn Butters

Magic Trick

We snuck out because I thought there were swings
There weren't; you liked the color scheme,
the Himalayan berries covering the slide,
with which you later showered my hair.
You climbed up the yellow fire pole backwards
and I asked, "Where's your hat, Captain?"
You asked me for a destination, any one,
but I'm no Atlanta, no Miami.
I'm a hammock, a notebook, a coconut.
Sharing this moonlight and child's play,
I'm fooled again that we exist together,
but you had me in Goldin's box.
Spin me around, saw me in half, flip me over,
will I be whole on the other side?
I knew it was fleeting; I took pictures.
Thinking I would feel close to you,
they now represent the distance.
With me behind the viewfinder,
you always looked away uncomfortably,
except for that final photo.
Into the back of your aged Jeep,
you were loading a shitty self-portrait.
You looked down, then up and *click*,
I caught you.

You were never mine to catch,
but these photos are mine to pour over,
smudge with tears, rip your face in half,
and finally, when it's time to move on,
set aflame and watch the smoke rise
like that of the cigarette we shared
at three in the morning
in a gravel-pitted, plastic-coated fantasy.