

Ellie Long

## Mistake

My body was a wreck—I would , could not,  
*say it*—the balcony was my beacon and click  
click click click I locked the four locks locked but

my body was a wreck and the things in the room were so far from me.

The note said swallow with plenty of water and wait in the bathtub but I don't  
have one and my body was—*not mine*—this was no blessing in disguise, this was  
a death sentence and the airport was too far and the sky too high and I couldn't meet  
my mother's eyes, couldn't get outta this one  
with a lie, my body a wreck and turning against me.

I prepared a shroud of toilet paper and waited. Put an end to it now.

Dear reckless nights, please accept this necklace clutched to a chest I don't  
own anymore, blood on the floor: swallow, wait, and be free.

## Relic

Synthesize a life  
into a tree and twist lift check-[manipulate]  
branches bone by bone by lift and check and tear  
and terror (*glue on a thought, stick on a prayer*)  
and phone calls phone, bullet holes to collar bones  
which will never break  
never break  
but if one does then carry it away on the back  
of a white elephant.  
Let it rest where it will (or whip  
till it collapses on a hill) shift by slip  
by shit "maybe the branches were roots after all" well they cut the roots  
cause they said they were strangling the temple.  
Poetry does not lie  
it only corrupts, corrupts us into beauty when there is none there, turns a temple built on the ashes of a long-  
dead elephant into a warzone.

## August

dahlia petals fall on  
my glass table  
embalmed in a  
tomb of curved  
glass  
outside the glass  
window grass green  
from fresh rain  
cries out in pain  
funeral perfumes  
for every blade  
and across this  
glass  
country  
the glass  
windshield of a car  
shatters upon a crowd.  
I feel disaster fold in upon me  
like the cool flow of a  
glass sculpture,  
I feel it sharpen with every drop of rain.