

Crisp and New

by Bear Courtland

She wrote me a letter in tangerine ink and left it on the table by the window to dry. It said, Dear Richard, I dreamed that the doctor called today. He said I'm so sorry. He said this has all been a terrible misunderstanding. It's not what we first had most feared. He asked me in his rumbling gravelspeak to come in to see him next Wednesday. He told me it isn't my fault. That my brain isn't slowly and deliberately killing itself, not barbarically stripping away its own wiring to expose razor bursts of electricity. He told me to go home and let you fuck me one more time. That this time I won't have a seizure. He said that this time it will be like the songs and the songs and the movies always promised.

Beautiful.

A cannonade of lightness and warmth. He said I just need to take some potassium supplements and a nap. To give it a day or two. In my dream, I ignored what he said. I ate a banana and went to the most bustle-struck, teeming, over-loud show in all the bumping blocks of downtown. I soaked up the hardened effervescent staircase melodies, the electric mandolin, the shining, sparking rise and fall of every bar, and I let the notes run calisthenics through my neuropathways. Bathed in them. Devoured the ever-loving life out of each layer of noise, every stomping foot, every flecking strobe light. And I braced for spasticity.

None came. Instead of freezing, stretching, hardening, wracking: I turned into water. I ebbed and ebbed and ebbed and sailed along the perfect moments, the human-colored chords. I achieved lift and glided home.

I startled you. I pulled you down and I healed you. We soared together for the first time. You were shades of blue and flapping over rooftop gardens and I was crisp and new as a summer apple.

Every nerve fiber was safe in its pillow of smooth insulation.

