

A Record of Wrongs

by Charles Lennox

A dead deer on the side of the road and the older boys not listening to her as they stab its eye with a stick. That other woman in her mother's kitchen cooking eggs and chorizo. Every broken promise and forgotten birthday, every unfulfilling kiss. The house fire she didn't start but now wishes she had. Her back pinned to the hardwood floor and his hand advancing down. Eric pointing at her face and announcing it to the classroom, the world. The way her lover just stands there, quiet, then shrugs his shoulders. Wandering the packed gym in the perfect prom dress, unable to find her date. The cashier saying, We're out of hot fudge sundaes. The name Sharnelle. Pleasant dreams of metal fish swimming above a reef of clouds cut short. A ten year old boy cussing her out and the sound of his father laughing in the background. Pictures and pictures of teenage friends locked arm in arm and her sitting off to the side, looking on. Someone she doesn't know in the spotlight, the crowd applauding. Her face clearly visible on the home video footage uploaded to the web. Ben Gibbard singing about the passenger seat as she drives alone on Pacific Coast Highway beneath an orange marmalade sky. The paramedic telling her how lucky she is to still be alive. Her infant hand reaching out, waiting to be taken.

