

I am very few of the things I used to be

by Crow Jonah Norlander

Focusing on reflections of clear lines on scummed glass, reflexes not quite as fast as they used to be, seeing things but not clearly, straining, these muscles worn out servos, grunting, can't quite bring things together, but why do this to yourself. More pointless than pull-ups unless I'm trying to prove a point. The layers cross sectioned and oozing.

Sometimes I say have a good evening. Sometimes I don't. Sometimes I say have a good weekend. It all depends.

My today's understandings are all over defied. These are unheard accents, his a sincere inflection. Everything feels so truly mixed that I wonder what I used to think that meant. My head doesn't fit in here anymore. Could I be over? I can only see fake faces. It's not just a feeling of newness, but impossibility. Shoes still exist. People get emails. Are people laughing or singing? Answers aren't around anymore. The only questions people ask are for directions. I am trying to be helpful, but there is just talking, and nobody isn't, but I am not deafened, I am looking, I am reading a detonator. There is nothing unclumsy about bodies.

It's hard to believe all these smudges are from contact. I don't know who's doing all this touching but it's evident that everything's been touched. Maybe it's been me but I haven't been in that many places. I've been to a few places many times. Even though I cough into my elbow I'm sure some of those germs get out. Air is erosive and bodies are filing down. Skin gets killed by scratching and itches cause digging. Atomic shrapnel gathers weight and the debris glances off of things. Minutia is violence.

There's a lot of honesty to bodies, as much as they want sex and flight. It makes sense to move, and to like the music to do it to. They find each other as friends based on willingness to dance. Sometimes there are drugs, but it doesn't matter. Often there is beer, and often it runs out. Mostly there is movement and watching it.

I used to admire simple games of does or does not exist.

My body is a leaky thing. I am choking on heat and my teeth are squealing through salty spittle lips. The forgotten feeling of an open wound vacuuming nearby cloth its way, blood reluctant to clot. My eyes are repositioning, re-purposed in anticipation of the worst. I have no nails left to chew. I have trained myself to recite these words: My body hates me back. I cannot stop drinking things. Someone suggested fluids, but there are so many kinds of fluids. Someone said a neti pot. I told him my mouth is the only part of me I want anything going in, even if that makes me homophobic, but I can't even think of an orifice without worrying about something entering it. I made myself a helmet. My scalp itches in the spot where it will split, so I scratch it and look around for my accident. I am overcome with rust and cuts, I imagine gloves sliced up. It's a constant cavity. Socks practically ushering the splinters into my toes. Flesh is so penetrable. Mistaking weight for heat and cold for moisture. Things exist at angles and sometimes come together. Someone always said not to rub my eyes, but my fingers fit there so perfectly. Curried knee fluid. A new kind of pain I'm not sure hurts. For fifty miles without knowing how flat footed I can seem. Twisting to get in. Clear your throat and spit where you piss, lather egg yolk hand soap. Gouging eyes scripture as a case for suicide.

Someone asked me if that meant I didn't mind not breathing.

Gnawing is a thing I can't imagine being without.

Something intertwines in there and each word heard gets paired with another. Not mirrored or rhyming but matching, sonic, immature. A hilly combination taking precedent. Repetition can help or do harm. Overlaid they'd be complements if you could ignore the overlap. Sentences are broken families and children in transition. If it's part of a person it can hurt, especially when it's inside or throughout. Do middle schoolers in the country care about insulated water bottles or laser pointers? I'm not looking for answers, but again, I just can't stop myself. It all comes to hinge on that moment in the lips. If I had to be honest I'd say that they're my weakest feature. It's not such a supreme vanity when you think about chapping, cracking, and blisters.

You are poplar, you are Skylar, you are lining up, you are ranching, you have a hand to lend, you are owed much.

I am very few of the things I used to be. I have redirected my creative energies into having opinions about women's boots. Worry doesn't seem to be a problem, but my mouth flap disagrees. Many things make me feel dirty. Everything I need is in reach. I don't know where it came from, but I will drink it. I will not drink it alone. I will not drink many.

The fact of things happening is easy to forget in the midst of everything unceasing. It's like why I sound stupid when people ask me my favorite movie or what I've been up to or why I love someone.

Saying the same things, later slightly altered, layered, our few voices corrode. If only for the playback moment a modified me sounds like part of the gang I always wanted. Our violence is documentation, our crime well intentioned, and my manipulation emotional. I can't paint, but I can paint with other things. This is what a chorus can look like. What was once a bunch has become a pair, and the universal language consists of twos, whether out of laziness or exhaustion or truth. Or threes.

