

# Checklist For My Next Lover

*by* Jennifer Donnell

Don't ask questions, if you don't want answers  
to what I think about  
when we lie in bed, post coitus, staring at the ceiling fan.

Even if it seems as though my twist toward your kiss means more-  
as I interlock our fingers, as if fingers  
are handed a mission statement before birth  
and ours were meant to loop like this, pinky against pinky.  
Know that it is only my body betraying my mind.

My stern attempt not to love you may grow soft from the oxytocin  
of touch and  
the sun of our lovemaking.

But even when I seem convinced that anything is possible, even  
the impossible,  
like loving you the way you love me.  
I will always stay the lover you can't own or have completely.

I'm the woman you'll only know by the curve of her hips and the  
hiss of her lips on  
your neckline.

Don't become a filament over the blue of my eyes  
when you could stay a glimpse at immortality, a pathway to  
transcend the body  
to the sphere just outside, where time ceases to matter  
and the ball of the universe grows warm in our bellies.  
I'll love you more than the next lover and never

as much as the lovers before you- the ones I learned these rules from.

Those I loved, who didn't love.

Those whose fingers traced mine and I imagined in rare,  
when, really, my body was doing for them  
what so many others could have done just as soundly-  
and did, or would, or hadn't yet.

