

Where My Boyfriend Lives

by Tara Laskowski

Where my boyfriend lives, the grass grows sideways — not up but into itself, like fingers entwined, like slow hula dancers. In his town, the people sing when they are dying. His mama makes roses bloom when she whispers to them; his dad keeps fire in a jar on his bedside table and releases it at night, sneaking up on it again in the morning when it has tired.

Where my boyfriend lives I visited just once, on a Thursday, when the streets are cleaned and a young man, hair slicked back by spit, stands just outside the doorway of the barbershop and hands out free candy to folks walking by. I took one, a chalky peppermint truffle, light as air. For the rest of the day I shot icicles out of the ends of my fingers. My boyfriend laughed at me and stepped on the heels of my shoes. That night we watched lightning, his dad's jar flames skipping across the sky, tripping over each other, eager to find a party.

Where my boyfriend lives, letters are written on banana peels. The ones my boyfriend sends me talk about ordinary things like the color of my eyes, the sound of steel digging into dirt, the need for everything to have a name. The letters are short and sometimes long. They talk about how when we are older we will move somewhere exotic.

