

Summer Girl

by Tia Prouhet

You're broken. Your eyes don't see quite right, and your hands don't feel quick enough. I love you anyway. You don't talk right, but I understand because you taught me how.

Sometimes, when people are looking at you and thinking things, I know better, but I don't know what to say. I tell you to stop when you honk like a goose cause you don't have enough words.

You smile at me, big and sweet like candied oranges, but you don't stop. And the people keep staring and I want to hit them and hit them, and not stop until they can't stare at anyone, until they understand that you're just different.

Maybe I can go to school some day, some big one covered in ivy and made of brick, and learn how to fix you, way inside.

If the teachers are good and I can afford it I'll go, and I'll work so hard everyday until I can open you up and pull out all the different inside of you. Like little bugs. I'll pick them all out, slowly, real careful.

You'll be amazed how still my hands can be while I pick out tiny bits of the bad stuff and put them all in a metal tray like in the movies. When you're all better and we're sisters again I can show you all the bits, floating in a jar. You'll want to know how I got it all out and I'll tell you it was love, it was love that taught me how. And you'll smile your orange smile and know it wasn't really.

We're getting older, though, and the doctor says this is the way you'll be till forever, whenever forever turns out to be. That's okay too, I think.

Let's smile in the sun every day. You can be my russet potato and I'll be your farmer. I'll clean you off and show everyone how a strange little root like you can be wonderful.

