

## AVALANCHES

When the sun pushed out morning, I was carrying you in my teeth. I was a she-wolf  
& you were my cub & I didn't know how to tell you that I didn't care when you set the  
kitchen floor on fire & when you complained about how small your teeth are I only  
opened my mouth to show you how small mine are too.


Cub! Avalanche! Let's put our combined wardrobe in a MegaBus bathroom & talk to how big  
the sky is here.

Dear how big the sky is here, we don't have the words! Some of our wolf-clothes are getting  
wet & a song exists to tell us exactly where to put our eyes when there are slim wars  
standing outside our idling cars holding roses.

& please tell your mother you are always in a church, one where the walls keep shifting & the  
songs have thick bass & the clergy understand that we both want to die &  
come back as two sleepy pups. Now the choir all makes bonfires on the roof with pew  
wood & now we put three lizards in the basket as a prayer request & now there is a  
tiny sign at the foot of our bed with our Latin names & the countries where we can still be  
found in the wild.

Dear same thing as before! Let me hold you after service like our fathers held each other before  
those wars came in in their beat-up coats & stroked our beards & rubbed the  
soreness from these old wolf legs. & please!

Please promise you will cling to me just like that when a sad man is drowning  
a puma in a river



& you are the sad man  
& you are the puma  
& you are the river.

## THIS MORNING LOOKED LIKE MY FAVORITE PICTURE OF US

In it, you are two years  
old & I am the ocean  
& you are building a sand-  
castle on my beach.  
Later that day, your mother  
pulled you out of me, crying  
& found a jellyfish wrapped entirely  
around your fat little leg.  
Shortly after this picture was taken  
your sandcastle gained legs &  
a meerschaum it smoked wolves in &  
I have to say you put incredible detail into  
the wolf-teeth for a sand-artist so young.  
You built a tiny sand-house  
that looked like a beautiful marriage  
& sat on the coast of a lake  
shaped like 1000 grenades  
with the pins pulled out, stocked full of  
rainbow trout & crappie & mermaid  
& a slow glance you gave me that  
was the end of everything else.  
The glance grew up near a decayed  
boot & its mother was a strong woman  
who was good at impossible math & underwater  
rockets & the boot did a solid job as a father  
figure & the glance got accepted to a fine  
college attended mostly by crappie & a few  
pregnant mermaids with whom it became closer  
than it ever had been in a long time with anyone  
& a few of them remain its closest friends to this day.  
Recently, they chipped in for a marvelous glass  
sculpture of a depressing Bergman film for its fifth  
wedding anniversary, a gift the glance likes to share  
a cigarette with on these new warm nights we've been  
walking in like they have always belonged to our skin.

THIS MORNING I REARRANGED ALL  
of the furniture in our apartment to  
spell out the future of our lives  
together, it was long and by  
the end I had written us into  
a corner & was mostly using the  
hair ties & cat toys I found under  
the wardrobe. Mostly it said you  
are beautiful mostly it said I love  
you mostly it was like the smell of  
apples mostly it said can we  
get a dog for me to watch sleep  
across our legs when I wake up at  
6 & don't know whether to sleep  
for another hour or make coffee  
that will be cold before you yawn  
out your name for me like it is a question,  
like you are afraid people in masks  
pointed at me with thumb & index  
finger pistols & took me from my  
warm valley next to your warm valley  
in our bed.

THIS MORNING WAS A BLOOD ORCHID  
in a vase of blue marbles the sun came  
through like a SWAT team that yells out  
everybody on the ground! We are your mother  
& we care for you!

& they're right!  
All the family photos, all this time they were  
there for me & I weep there on the floor  
thinking of them in labor in the backseat  
of my dad's Nissan probably the only time  
in his life he broke the speed limit & my  
tears become lakes & they seem so far.

Their voices I can barely hear now  
& all my 4-H projects are about crying  
but I win all the ribbons  
& the judges leave the country  
& write soft bossa nova songs  
about foxes that are metaphors  
for the way the sun looks at 6pm  
over the tree line in late May &  
the SWAT team helps me with my rent  
just until I can get back on my feet  
& I give them my love  
& say I'll pay them back  
but never pay them back.

SWAT team, I miss you  
please keep me in your hearts  
& in the letters you write to your  
friends who have been abroad  
so very long now.

Give them this handkerchief  
embroidered all over with the words  
"cherry blossoms". It was sewn for me  
by my dearest, oldest friend who was  
talented, soft-hearted and overly literal  
and whose sister I had to hold so tight  
at his funeral when she was shaking  
too hard to stand.

THIS MORNING WAS A LONG  
picket fence I wrote a letter to.  
It said Dear long picket fence,  
I realize this is a bit unusual  
but i wanted to take the chance to let you  
know how important this job is to me.  
I spent all my money on  
fields to lie in, I have forgotten  
to brush my teeth for years.  
I am highly qualified for something  
I don't remember, but I assure you,  
long picket fence, it will be valuable  
some bright spring day  
when we've all cleaned our glasses  
& are done crossing off sick days  
& have exactly the right feelings  
for this interminable bear market.  
Long picket fence I have long  
admired your crosspieces  
& while I am not made of wood  
I think I would thrive  
in such a position.  
My first impression is a thick one,  
but in my heart I have long white  
bones that could be tied tight &  
straight they could be an asset  
to your fine team.  
Thank you long picket fence,  
for your consideration.  
I am a fan & will continue to be  
until the day I can stand up.