things that remind me of you

lazy riffs in slow songs
because they remind me of your slow drawl
when you’re carefully picking out the right words to say
like you’re picking flowers
one by one,
to hand in a bunch to me.
delicately pinched in the middle,
tied gently with a strand of grass
a bouquet of your words
blooming towards me.
i take it gingerly from you
let the roots curl themselves around me
let the petals
settle themselves in the crook of my neck
and i listen.

Yellow

Yellow is
my grandpa, seventy-something
having lived through one war
and one communist regime
so bent on his obedience that
they decided a re-education camp
would be his next home.
My grandpa,
with his three gunshot wounds
and bad back, awake at 6AM
gingerly watering every
dainty plant in his garden
with his calloused hands
and soft eyes.
I’m almost nineteen and it’s almost time
to move into my own apartment. Everyone
says to take pictures and videos—everyone
tells me to make sure I have this record that
everything is fine or not fine, because you
wouldn’t want them to hold any damages
against you if it’s not your fault.
You have to make sure.

I don’t know how to tell them that
they’ll probably try to charge us for
some broken appliance that never
existed at all anyways.

I’m almost nineteen and it’s time to find my
own space: I’m a part-time squatter in
my parents’ home and part-time inhabitant
of my hometown and I need to start looking
for a place that’ll take me full-time.
I go to school in a shitty beachside college
town. The faucets will be leaky and
the door hinges will be squeaky; my
desk probably won’t sit right and the
windows won’t open smoothly and
I won’t be able to catch it all, I know.

I see myself in the video:
nineteen, bleary-eyed, a little round at the edges.
“The faucet leaks,” I say. I watch my hands turn
the dial and remember how I used to clench
my fists hard when I was upset, wanting
to hurt myself without knowing how, the
little red crescents bright against my palm.

“The door hinges could use a little oil,”
I lightly kick it closed, holey socks coming into
frame, and I can feel the familiar ache in my
knee from a hiking trip gone wrong—from how I used to push myself with the kind of thoughtless manner that people can only really have towards themselves.

“The screen is ripped right there,” I say, pushing the window up with considerable effort. I can place the same strength I used to use to keep people away from me, thinking, “Keep your hurt to yourself,” too scared of being contagious to realize that I was just hurting myself, only with less red crescents and more red eyes.

We’ve walked around the entire apartment, gotten every nook and cranny and ordinary household function. It’s late in the evening now. But I just needed to make sure, even if they’ll find some way to charge us anyways.

The camera is down. Someone forgot to stop the footage. And I hear myself say, through the type of golden light that only falls like this in our shitty beachside college town, “But it’s ours.”
love postcard

i wrote you a love postcard:
picked out the one with badly
drawn dolphins and gaudy text
50 cents and just small and light enough to
slip into your back pocket
because the notion of a love letter feels
too heavy for an eighteen year old
400 miles away from home and so desperate
to just send you a piece of me.
i tell you about my plant and how i
wish you could meet her
how she’s growing and how scared
i am that she’ll wilt because
i’ve never taken care of a plant before
and all i know to do is give her a funny name
and talk to her every once in a while.
i overwater her because i’m scared that
she’s not eating enough
but her soil is fast-draining and i set her
in the corner of my desk that gets the most sun
so i think she’ll be okay.
you’d love her. she’s started growing towards the light
trying her very best, i can tell. and
she reminds me of you
i love you
i sent you a love postcard so you would know.