

## **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.

## Damage Tape

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.