

*from where i stand*  
Michael Capozzi

at times i have to remind myself  
that the air actually loves me and the car rides last  
longer when i'm happy but the sunset will never last for  
your perfect picture; my bed is my home  
and it's okay to live alone while you're young and old, but never in between;  
the music i listen too defines what my goals in life are,  
and the voices give me guidance more than you can imagine;  
i am my own smile and you are your own teeth,  
and i'm perfectly fine that you are not me.

*city*

c'est incroyable qu'une ville  
ne dort jamais, tout se que  
je crois faire c'est rêver.

*poe*

she was as see through as her  
fish-netted leggings.  
she sat on the quad with flowers tangled in her braids  
and a book of poe on her lap.  
she told me about how his voice at 3am over  
the phone sounds like god, and how his eyes  
look like jesus; she was a catholic girl, raised  
with a bible in her right hand, and a handful of experiments  
she thought up to change the world when she was seven  
in the other. she told me about the cracks in between  
his fingers, and how they resemble the roman roads;  
not perfect, but they all lead to his heart. sometimes,  
she likes to picture the way her right eye  
twitches when he kisses her, and then she  
starts to wonder about him and how he  
treats her similar to her father but the words  
to describe this aren't coming out of her mouth fast enough for her to think of the next sentence.  
"tell me about you," she asked.  
i write poems in the dark hours of the night you talk to him;  
i am envious of whatever faults you find in his fingers.  
i never knew god, but fuck i swear i met him in your laughter.  
i see your teeth in my dreams but when i wake up, you're still  
talking to him at 4am.  
i memorized the way your foot lifts off the ground when you're about to  
take another step, it's hesitant but curious, similar to the  
way i want to tell you all of this but instead,  
you sit on this bed of snowbound grass  
sharing stories of poe and not enough of what makes your  
eyes twitch, or what faults you can find in me. open your hand,  
place it over my black heart, i don't remember the last time it turned red.

*hoboken1*

he runs his fingers up and down her  
arms, playing with her veins like they were  
guitar strings; the same way i showed him  
how to do that in senior year. i can swear  
that the days are dark but the light  
in him is just enough to brighten  
the smile on the girl that he loves. this is the day  
i confessed the november tragedy  
(i still remember her voice). he simply  
looked me in my dilated eyes and told me that  
he couldn't empathize with me, but i just didn't even  
know if i wanted it. the train cars are my father's  
lies and the tracks are my mothers teeth; separated  
by a mere four feet gap that i don't think i see in my  
house anymore.

god forgive my parents,  
they know not what they did  
or what they did to me.

vw

i don't like taking pictures of people because  
i feel that they'll never last. we were in the  
back seat of a vw and the sidewalks were piled high  
with snow (i wonder if this is your favorite season).  
i could tell she likes her hands held in winter, but her  
hands are shaking and there's a lump in my throat;  
but i can't seem to decide if it's the jumbled words  
i'm trying to tell you (the hair you have looks pretty?)  
or if it's the words you told me that i'm still trying to stomach.

*3am on city island*

she swore by her five inch heels  
that the city lights ran through her veins.  
her mother complained about  
how she strutted through the doors smelling  
like my neck.  
i told my father about the way  
she smiles when i call her “my little darling” in  
cold hours of 2am when she rolls onto my shoulder.  
i told my mother about how she rubs my spine with her paint-brush  
fingers, hoping to turn my back into a starry night by  
van gogh; she’s my shooting star.  
her diaphragm syncs to the bass kick of “wanderlust”  
and i think i fell in love with her adventure; it’s  
not even the weekend yet.

she asked me about my past and the only thing i could tell her  
was that the devil is paying me double to see you smile.

it began with her eyes, green like the trees  
outside 72nd and broadway.  
she asked me for the time in verdi square,  
but seconds felt like hours the way she caught me.  
it began when my heart broke for the 7th time (i'm tired  
of trying to put it back together,  
i may just leave it a mess for someone else to fix this time).

it began with her kissing my nose.  
it began with the way she says my name  
(my tastebuds are filled to the brim with her).  
it began with a crease in her lips, she smiles  
like the moon (maybe i can be her sun).  
it began with her breath in my lungs.  
it began when her eyelashes strung together  
like a violin, and every time she blinks, i swear i  
hear "all of the lights" (it's dark in here and  
i'm scared that sometime soon i'll find a light).

it began the moment i saw her.  
it began the moment i told her i loved her.

*text.26*

1:28am

come kiss my lips.

come cuddle me.

my lips are chapped (i think the devil is in my tongue).

i need you like the crescent moon, similar to the shape  
of your smile when you lay in bed and i know in can sleep happy.i dream about realities that don't even compare to  
what i have with you and something about the way you  
laugh conducts enough electricity to give my heart another beat  
(i think i'm tired of skipping songs, my pockets are empty  
and god has been raising the price to 1.99).

1:36am

i need you in the morning like a religious prayer;

i put my hands in yours, interlocking fingers (i think  
the first time i held a girls hand was filled with thoughts  
of what my mother would think and how my hands  
were oceans).

i was 16 when i fell in love for the first time but

it's been 5 more times and 4 years later

i stand looking at myself in the mirror, questioning what  
it really is to be an angel of god.

*she drank a venti vanilla chai latte*

she sat next to me near the window  
at starbucks on  
41st and madison with a journal  
covered in pastel lines and a black backdrop.  
on the top center read “2011 was the year i screamed  
fuck life’ and ‘fuck me”  
as a running header. she ran  
through my head, tilting this little snippet  
of her brain  
towards me and i swear that she looked at me  
but all i could do was make the sign of the cross  
hoping god heard my muffled voice, drowned out by  
the sounds of yellow taxis on the crosswalk and  
whispers of angels on the corners asking for my pockets.  
i’ve never tasted sixty miles  
per hour but i can imagine it’s the same  
as when she writes “your shirt looks like my thoughts”;  
i’m falling in love too easily.  
i want to read every inch of your body; your arms  
have the bible etched in your veins and a fifth of my poems  
are scribbled on your aortas; my mother’s wedding vows  
are in my right eye and my father,  
my father just takes care of himself. i don’t think my eyesight is  
getting any better, you slid the note two spaces down  
and i think i shed a tear but i can’t remember whether  
you were smiling for joy or the fact you missed my hand.

*1train*

there was a couple on the 1train  
and every second there was a pda. my  
pupils grew threefold for the opposite reason  
theirs did. her boyfriend left at 225th, and i  
couldn't help but look at how miserable she was.  
her once butterflies now struggled to fly underground  
and fell off the platform near columbia. they lost their wings  
the same way i lost love back in the hot month of june.  
she became a normal human whereas fourteen stops ago  
her teeth were snow and his face was an avalanche and  
their lips had a conversation that their  
eyes weren't paying attention to. she closed her eyelids  
and i could imagine that her imagination was him holding  
her hand; running his thumb through her palm, trying  
to predict a future with him in it. they were lost in each others  
glasses and they were blind to everything but  
their silhouettes. he took a piece of her soul when he left,  
i pray he returns it back.

*a poem from the other side*

to the boy i once gave my life away to,  
it seems that your destructive  
mind has broken my walls. you're a continent, an  
ocean, a lifetime away and i love you with  
everything inside of me, but  
i have found  
someone  
else.  
i don't want you to compare me to her,  
because i'm not. i tried to make this process  
go as slow as i could possibly make it,  
from blocking your number, to making sure the flower  
petals never fell on the ground anymore.  
my hair that night went up in a bun, and the poems  
you're sending me have me worried as to whether  
or not you're going to take your life away, but i guess that you're not  
my responsibility anymore, maybe one day i will still be yours.  
please refrain from emailing me/ contacting me/ making  
posts on public websites about me. don't' reply to this email.  
that's all i have to say.

*she sits two rows over*

she dresses in all black like  
someone died but she loves her grandmother.  
i obsess over the fact her eyes are  
the same color as her's but  
the reality is her earlobes are pierced  
and her childhood wasn't the same as mine.  
she kisses her mother and father goodnight  
and takes off the makeup that she thought would make her  
look better. i need you here in the late  
hours of the night where all my mind thinks of is you.  
come by for a little and please  
allow me to hear your stories. i want to hear about  
your grandmother. i want to hear you.

*her mouth is a constellation*

i don't think it's allowable  
for me to be jealous of someone i  
haven't ever met but i wonder what  
goes through your mind when he says "i love you,  
my little starlet." the other  
day i swear i overheard the news reporters  
on channel seven  
talk about the cinderellas that  
walk out of your job because you  
give them glass slippers and make their parents  
actually love them. in the background,  
my roommates are talking to their temporary girlfriends and  
they're whispering "he can't see anything, don't  
worry about him. he should be used to this by now."  
my mother, she worries about me. she told  
me to stick to myself like super glue and the only  
thing that should separate me is the sweaty palms  
from holding your hand in subway cars at damn near midnight.  
i need you now more than anything mom. tell me that  
i'm going to be okay and maybe one day, i'll be happy.  
i need more than a shooting star, i need the whole galaxy.

*soliloquy.1*

she was the queen of coney island;  
our relationship was both her diaphragm  
and the cyclone; broken, but classic.  
i wrote her letters with intentions of not  
telling her, and i wrote her name on a lock  
that's somewhere she'll never visit with me.  
her voice is stitched in the clothes i wear and  
every time i wash them, she screams a little more  
and more  
and more  
until i feel guilty during the nights i question if  
i was even the right person for who she was.

*instructions to someone new*

1. tell me your name; where are you from?
2. ask me mine, i promise i'm not like them.
3. tell me your favorite artist; which one comes to mind first?
4. ask me about how many instruments i play.
5. tell your father about me. surprise him.
6. tell me about your childhood, did you ever picture me on your hand during recess when the kids in the back corner predicted the future?
7. what's your favorite way to style your hair?
8. come meet me at my house, it's down a road if you can think straight.
8. i think i'm losing count of how many times you take my breath away.
9. i think this was 10, ask me what my father told me at that age, he told me i'd meet a woman like you.

*poconos*

my fathers eyes flash back his  
farm/animal-infested childhood and he's starting  
to hold hands with a woman who's not my  
mother. who am i to judge  
if he's happy living this way?  
the music's blasting too loud in  
my headphones to hear the whispers of  
the nights where i cried myself to sleep, something  
so poetic i don't think i even understand it yet.  
i remember the way she promised she'd never  
leave me in the night, but the night  
i ran away, she didn't believe i was actually  
between the intersection of  
white plains road and pelham parkway north.  
don't let me sink, darling.

*i don't think she knows who i am*

she can't see the world and her  
glasses are a little too big for her eyes  
but she knows that god can see her  
and she was taught that was all  
that ever mattered. so she talked about  
god and skinny dipping in the  
first week of april. i think she's been with this boy for a while  
and he sees the body her mother curved out of marble.  
she talked about inhaling the halos that come  
out of her best friend's mouth and she screams  
"fuck life" at the top of her lungs when no one is  
around but god is with her; she's in my mind and  
i believe that she thinks of me in the darkest hours.

*gold lives inside of you*

i stood on the corner of 242nd and broadway thinking  
about how when we kiss, she always wore her beanie.  
god (my therapist) suggested i keep my problems in alphabetical order  
but i organized them backwards; you're always the first.  
the sun never seems to want to  
tuck himself in the days i tend to stay hidden from this thing my mother calls home,  
and i'm running out of breath (i think  
it's the cigarettes i'm hiding from everyone) to catch up with the words i'm trying to write down  
but they're faster  
than the pace of my footsteps and lighter than the gasoline in my pocket and  
something in the way i see god in her eyes is keeping me alive  
if not for the moment, then for the week and maybe if  
i'm lucky, for the year.  
my fingertips burn from an ounce of orange light; i forget where that falls  
on an electromagnetic spectrum, but i see ultraviolet in the way  
you walk, the way you slur my name when you've  
drank too many mixes your friends told you tasted good.  
i'm only for the moment, i don't know how long this will last, darling.  
take hold of my hand, if not for a whole song let me  
tell you about how my feet don't move in rhythm but my fingers  
create waves.

*elle a besoin d'une calculatrice d'or pour diviser*

she drank slow but had this skip in her dance.  
she ordered me a gin and tonic on the rocks.  
she eyed me across the street (i'm losing track of time).  
she marched in front of me, leading me  
to an apartment. the walls were painted black and the  
lights were a shade of blue rain.  
there were two floors in the penthouse.  
she giggled when i told her how nervous i was.  
i felt my glass shake, this mixture of pale ale and oranges  
resembled a tsunami.  
my eyes convulsed like cracked sidewalks during  
earthquakes; my teeth were grinding, (not like a dance to seduce  
but rather the last lick of hope for the protagonist  
in slasher flicks screaming for help).  
she told me everything would be okay.  
she undressed herself and told me god doesn't  
watch her when she sleeps; rather, he  
takes the night off and works overtime in the morning.

i fell in love on the second floor of her apartment,  
i don't know why it took me two stories to tell her.