

guys (etc.)

a list, i suppose,
with many many
many many gaps:

you asked what color my eyes were
when we first went to bed together,
you guessed hazel, i laughed and said
no, clearly green, like sea glass,
like there's a difference between
two made-up things, like there's
a difference when there's two
unmade bodies so close.

you asked if you could watch
and i said sure, considering we'd
spent five hours in bed together,
considering you already knew what
i tasted like sopped from your beard,
considering half this town's cars
and shrubs had already been coated
in my piss by this point—still,
you observed, researcher that you are,
scholar of filth and ritual, making me
your exquisite footnote.

(you know, this was originally
going to be called “faggots i know,”
but that isn't quite true, and then
it was “dicks i've seen,” but that
was wrong for like twenty reasons;
“dudes,” “hombres,” “men”: wrong,
wrong, wrong. so “guys” it is.)

you cried the first time we slow
danced, long time coming.

every thought i have
about you is blister bright,

a searing glow on my neck
and knees, the heat of shame

turned right side up.
we moved in a small circle,

tooth to tooth, tear to tear,
the room spinning,

a two-minute song
a long time coming.

you were a lover of a lover—my girlfriend's ex-
boyfriend. we stayed at your place on cocoa beach—
what was your name again?—and watched stop
making sense—*how old was i again?*—and then
we got real close—*was this my first rodeo again?*

(i know these things: adrian; 18; nope.) you didn't
realize i was twice your size until the lights came on.
you said goddamn before you took me in your mouth
but only in the kitchen, both air-drying and parched,
did you made me feel truly big.

("guys" is, at once, wonderfully
capacious and a failed term. who
is a guy? *what* is a guy? you guys,
relax. relax you guys. am i one?
was i ever one? and how about
you? guys, *chill.*)

you asked when i was going to come up
to pittsburgh and have an affair with you.
i said i had a man but that was silly
because because because because

and you knew it, too.

i would've spent all night on the dance
floor with you, or tousling your bad hair,
or emptying your urine bottle. i would
have spun in circles with you.

even in pennsylvania.

they found you at the top of the hill,
half your head blown off. you left
a goodbye note online. i cried and cried
because because because because

you followed me into my home. i saw you
from a block away. i was sneaking a smoke
while i was on the phone. i saw you, you hopped
the gate, said you had something to ask me.
you saw something in the way i held that
cigarette, held your gaze, took it from you.
guys like you would follow me in vans, try to
jump me at bars, nothing new, it's nothing new.
men exhaust me. i look at you and i eat it up—
i've got your number man i've got it.

you were my father's friend—or coworker,
as i'm not sure of the rules and lifespans
of these things among straight men—and i had
never seen a mustache like that before—
so blond and full and pin-neat, as it had to be
for the power company. i was 5 or 6, i didn't
quite get what a hurricane was, why you
came over, what mandatory overtime was,
why you were so kind, why you had to move,
where tampa was, how i could ever get such
a perfect feature to my face, whether i'd
still be shy around you.

anyway, you should
give me a call sometime.