

rental car

is everything splendid borrowed?
you let me read your Rita Dove books
& i didn't write in them
knowing i would have to return
each cracked spine to your shelf.
your room smelled like cactus candle
& brushed teeth. the window laughed
flecks of car tire alley way.
do you miss what you took from me?
i miss removing your shirts
from the laundry bag before you got home.
i would wear them like dresses
& then place them back, fumbling
to fold them as they came. last autumn
when i was made of different
less vibrating molecules
i rented the car i drove to my parent's house.
grey rain spit water constellations
on the windshield.
the radio came in clear as a knife.
i plugged my phone in & played
Death Cab for Cutie's *Plans* from start
to finish. i pretended
the car was mine even though i only had
four days with it. i forget why
i even came home. the drive from
New York to corn field Pennsylvania

dwindled me to nothing but urges.
i wanted to stand in the backyard. i wanted
to walk the dog all the way over
the waning moon. staring at the car
in the gravel driveway, it looked terribly
out of place. all shiny & white &
fresh. the insides smelled translucent.
the headlights cut holes in my father.
i said i missed you when i didn't.
i was only thinking about missing the car
& missing this American gasoline freedom.
in my parent's house, we wear couches down
until their stomachs touch carpet.
i do the same. let my shoes come to pieces.
sand my heart down to a mirror.
i took my brother on a ride
around the block & i considered
car dealerships. all their newness.
i envied all steering wheels.
you were at home toe-deep in
your own private encyclopedias
& maybe sitting by your window. i missed
your ankles. i missed your closet.
tragic ride home. goodbye beautiful life.
the car key like a talisman. you can
come in & out of love with someone several times
just on the same highway. my life still fits
in back seats of cars i don't own.
turned the radio into a boy &
let his voice lie to me. i gave back
your books one by one without telling you.
in the morning, i dropped the car off
& walked home up Jericho Turnpike
that dreary Monday. car horns squawked
like tired old birds.

distortion

let's run between cars on 5th avenue.
headlights like quarters to spend
on the afternoon heat machine.
once we were racing on the new jersey turnpike
& we should have disintegrated but didn't.
sever the radio into equal fourths.
one for you one for me. car legs
warbling like song birds.
i hung the stop light around my neck
to make you laugh. red comes
like a wide afternoon. you tell me
to read your lips in the honk
of the dead birds. all i can see
you saying is, "maybe maybe."
your teeth are doors i want to pull open.
we play tag in the tremoring city.
no one has eyes anymore. we are using
magnificent implants that only show
objects that smell pleasant.
there aren't enough trains so
only glossy people come & go.
in the rear view mirror our
mothers are singing without sound.
the pigeons are in the trunks
we have to let them out. a simple lock
stands between me & a love poem.
staring into the car-blur i can almost see

an animation of a balloon leaving
a boy's hand. in the morning
all i want is the right spoon.
at night, please give me someone
who worries about yellow as much as me.
the tv stopped asking questions
& now is just an eye piece.
i periscope through lunch & catch
a glimpse of tomorrow
i wasn't supposed to see yet.
i love ruining surprises. do you miss
the sound of the can opening?
a stray dog bites a lamp post down.
none of us are flattened
but all of us are unrecognizable.
mirrors spit us back out & fold
like pocketbooks. there's a wild
twenty dollar bill in the bush or
is that just a kiss of weed?
tell me, what is it you want to see
less clearly? i want to stand
on either side of the street
as cars crackle & spit & try
to say your name
while you try to say mine.