

IT HAPPENED LONG AGO

I'm washing the dishes
when I think of those boys

I once loved, griefstruck
at how easily they appear to me

in their exact incarnations;
their soft, booze swelled lips

answering *hello*,
as though I'd called them

like so many Saturdays,
waiting for their arrival

under the streetlights
with their broken cars,

Bob Dylan cassettes
and salty-sweet taste.

What is it about the mundane
that brings them back

to me? I can still see
Andrew, dishonest waiter

I wrote poems
on the backs of receipts for,

and somewhere,
there's a picture of us lying

in a parking lot, drunk;
our mouths open

to swallow the glow
of a deserted mini-mart.

Even now I want
them all back:

the savages, losers,
and dealers,

the summers of no sleep,
our eyes glass-black

with the heat of no caution,
side-swaddling between cars

and death. The rough
hands of morning

and ninety degrees,
our soaked clothes thrown

in the brush, our brazen,
pale bodies we buried

in the river. I believed
in nothing but us,

the old mistakes of youth
and bliss, our skin drying

in the sun. These things
are useless to me now,

days of work
and clean kitchens,

the alarm clock
and a dream lost,

now some fool
who makes lists

and still forgets,
who drives too fast

with nowhere to go.
The windows are down,

radio blaring an awful song
I hum down grocery aisles

choosing tomatoes, lemons,
and it is certain

we will never meet again—
But this street,

this foot on the gas
feels like yesterday

we met, the wolves
of love nibbling

at our skin, not yet
ripping us apart.