Field Notes

1.

I called you from the truck stop.

I planned to sleep there all night.

The attendant mumbled something over the loud-speaker about how unattended baggage may be suspect, but I was busy talking to you, so I wasn't paying attention.

I was too concerned about the caution tape surrounding the entrance.

Why must relief need a warning?

I only pulled the car over to unclench my hands in the first place.

2.

You once told me I felt pain so deeply you needed to build a bridge over it, wide enough for us both to stand on—

You bought green muck boots.

You became a carpenter.

You told me, "you have to be tough with fruit trees, don't let them out stay their welcome."

I uprooted everything.

No more peaches.

Dead bees tangled in my hair means July is almost over.

The rain against the rhododendron tunnels makes the forest roar and seem impossible to leave.

You haul the garbage bags full to the side of the road and we do terrible things to each other.

How did you picture this ending?

We flip the switch.

The light goes off.

Surely, even the sea forgets its wreckage.

4.

Night flooded and I couldn't find the bridge anymore (was there a bridge).

The lazy capo of the moon, drunk and forgetting—darkness doesn't destroy; it only confuses.

I thought I saw you in the fog, but it was only a stranger standing beside a fence.

Shadows ambush like evening medications.

My clumsy hands no longer pointing to the moon, but at the pink ribbon blood makes when it mixes with water and circles the drain.

Tell me, where is the bridge—

If this is really what I think this is, then I cannot

screw this up.

I climbed into the car.

Spread the Atlas across the dashboard.

Look at how much space I'll live without you.

6.

I unbraided

my long hair in the rearview, every exit sign a vertebra along the highway's back;

possibility without the bruises.

Sweetheart, I'm ready to confess tomorrow isn't coming for us.

I pulled the car over,

whispered your name into a shoebox, and abandoned it in the river where we surrender the things we long for most.

The empty passenger seat is real and it must no longer depend on you.

I mistake shadows for churches.

I can build a whole world out of lack.