

Lost Glass

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ISSUE 226, FALL 2018

People desired things they didn't know they wanted. Angry voices, heat, emergencies. That was a summer. *Isn't there anything you can take?* she said. She meant, *I'm tired of your suffering.* The rustle of the pigeons; a woman doing laundry, unfurling the white rippling sheet. Thick wind made a timpani of an empty can bouncing down the street, until it was silenced beneath the wheel of a bus. We made love, if you want to call it that, once that month. I had a dream in which a voice said, *Make a mountain of this work, something that can be climbed.* It devolved into strangeness—owly skies, fiddling hands, small fires burning against a vastness. The man with the red tin box I passed each day going to the office: I never caught his eye, though I tried. *Los Angeles*, I thought, *lost glass.* Talking of the childhood of our love she said, *It made me sad that you would leave the next morning, it made all the sense in the world, it just made me sad.* Vomit on the street on graduation day. The color of the stubble banks on the side of the highway. Driving through a tunnel, approaching its end: a small circle of the world growing larger. What was it I was turning over in my mind? The standard image of loneliness in the city is to brush up against a stranger. I felt the waiter's warmth transferred to the wineglass stem. I held it close. As close as I came, no one brushed against me, no shoulder rubbed mine. On the hottest day of summer, ash fell slowly and broke against my shoe. In our apartment, the glass on glass of dishes being stacked, who was doing them and who was not, the small tensions. She moved further away from me. Late at night, the crossing signal's orange hand flashing in a window across the street. Heat, two neighbors on the front stoop, drifting voices. From my window, hidden, inches above where they spoke, I held my breath: late August

by then, one of the last warm evenings. They were talking about living in a city; people passing through their yellow rooms. They were speaking about how they wanted to be touched.