

Back from the classroom I walk Into the cold gray Virginia mist On the red sidewalk bricks past The skeleton of the library who Is getting higher and getting stronger It smells like ash and so I get a sandwich and I realize You have texted me And I put Down my tuna and panic I sent you a copy of Coeur de Lion after you broke up with me I started to write about you but Decided to let someone else do the talking So the last message I sent A day earlier was: I was thinking This morning about how you cut Your finger teaching yourself Ikebana Now out in the half rain half light What there is no good word for I bought a cookie and A purple Prius hit me The cookie fell and I started crying Yesterday I walked along the curving Flood walls with the cold guardrails I went to the gay thrift store and Every electronic Kind of looked like a toaster I can feel this poem taking a turn It's starting to be about you Tack that debt to my dowry But imagining you bending the flowers How when you told me about that I Sent you photos of my wild arrangements Thistles billy bobs ranunculus St. john's wart and eucalyptus I wonder if that's when you knew it Now I think of dropping the vase Full of 80 dollars of roses in Restaurant Gary Danko where I had Nine hour shifts with no breaks I was pulling thistles through bouquets My boss told me That nuts would cause neck pains and At night I would close my eyes and I Could see the imprints of flowers And then would walk the length of the warf Carrying week old lilies to sell them When it was sunny I wore a white Wool cap that I bought at a barber shop Some days I would open the grocery store Straighten out the candy The detritus in the keyboards had to be blown out With tiny bottles Counting money in and then out again at night Keeping people's forgotten cash back Beeping and beeping Eating returned items My train ride was an hour each way I was always seeing people that I hate Getting delayed by suicides or failed brakes Dropping that vase Will there be flowers in your planned economy Will the grey jumpsuited socialists Be allowed their baby's breath lapel You just want to win you always said So maybe If by then flowers are still growing In some toxic sun scorched after-city Or cracking through the littered cement In a dusty machine hall maybe Sometimes Tracy Chapman would come in To buy herself purple anemones I would wrap them in paper I wanted to be her young shotgun bitch At the staff meetings there was clapping Customers were called guests and I was fired For texting an hour before my last shift was over A man who piled the oranges took over my register I was escorted out of the building and monitored As I cleaned out my locker I dumped it in the trashcan out back and Checked my phone a block later Brian called saying that a friend had been stabbed to death I realized I had thrown my final check out With all the junk bloody from my eczema I had to go back and dig through the trash I was sobbing The entire store watching me through the window But there are always things blooming On our suit pockets Out of the visible range This actually is not The right planet for joking Have you seen the clay wicker baskets and elephant pots Of Shuji Ikeda Speckled with fire spit from the wood oven Were you practicing in silence What caused the knife to slip