

Handfuls

When I was younger,
I used to collect fireflies.
Tiny drops of sunlight drifting through the black blanket of night.
Once they were in my cupped hands,
I would slide them into clear mason jar kingdoms out on the back porch.
I'd lay my head next to the jar
And watch the bright yellow flickerbees blink kisses to me.
I caught well over a million baby lightening bolts throughout my seemingly endless summers.

Now, there are seams tearing in white dresses
And every postage stamp I see is torn in two.

I can't tell you when it happened,
And I sure as hell can't tell you why,
But sometimes vending machine lights flicker at the gas station by my house,
And for a split second I swear I can see fireflies behind the glass.
Maybe it's because I noticed one day my hands were leaving too many cracks to keep light in,
Too many holes that could never be filled.

Someone mailed me a pair of hands last week.
They were packaged in a cardboard box.
No paper.
No bow.
I haven't stopped shaking since I peeled the tape off the crease.
Not because of the present,
But because I couldn't remember the last time I had held them.
But more importantly,
When was the last time that they had caught a firefly?

Nevermore

I write to fight off pill bellied crows.
Fat, greasy, feathered birds with
Stomachs filled to the brim with round white release.

When wolves howl Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata,
and the dewy grass blows kisses to the stars,
I sit still and silent on the edge of my bed.
I dangle my feet off,
I know that nothing will pull me under.
They wouldn't dare.

I have become friends with them.
The shadows that pull at my ankles while I swim,
Or the ones that mirage my steering wheel into the knob of a safe
And only smashing into a tree would crack the code.

These...

Things

Dangle me off the tips of buildings by my cuticles.
They sign their names into my skin.
Purloin my breath and hold it for ransom at gunpoint.

But,

Poe's raven has nothing on my pen,
For I write with black feather ink and beak tips,
I write to connect stanzas instead of veins,
To create a poem instead of a eulogy.
To take the temptation away.
Slap my four-year-old, cookie-jar-hand away
From the key to the medicine cabinet.

I write because in this moment,
It is the primary thing that reminds me I'm alive.

Just a Touch

When you finally decide to have children,
I hope that they have your hands.

Sun-dried and calloused,
With caterpillar-length fingers and
Petoskey stone fingernails.

I hope when they write poetry,
Your laugh spills out of the ink and rumbles around the paper,
Wrestling their words into place.

When they drink black coffee,
I hope their fingers drum out your heartbeat on the handle of the mug.
And it will be as loud as a homemade dress at graduation.

When they kneel beside their beds,
Fingers intertwined,
Hands clasped,
I hope they pray to you.

My hands didn't know how to hold you just right,
And you know I don't read the Bible,
But you used to cup the sides of my face as if
I were the apple from Eden,
As if I were worth the risk.

Hold me underwater.
Baptize me.
Drown me.
It's basically the same thing.
As long as I can feel your hands.

I hope your children can smell you in their knuckles
And see your smile in their own lunar-shaped cuticles.
Selfishly, I hope they know my name,

But if I'm only granted one thing,
I hope,
More than anything,
That they have your hands.