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I Want to Make Peace With This City

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I WANT TO MAKE PEACE WITH THIS CITY

By: Autumn Franz

I want to make peace with this city
but every street corner is a route to your house,
the Taco Bell looks unappetizing.

The air smells like your lavender bubble bath,
it's only a 7-minute bike ride to your house,
and we kissed at every red-lit intersection.

I want to make peace with this city because in the center of it all
is the school

Where we used to pass each other on our ways to class,
live 100 feet apart, right down the hall,
only skip nights together from the shame
of leaving my roommate alone,
beatbox and mimic whale calls in bed.

I still have two more years of college left
and I don't want to spend them
avoiding my freshman dormitory

or your parking spot

or any of the play productions.

I want to make peace with this city
but I passed your house the other day and nearly cried.

The blue paneling is chipping away,
all the lights were off,
no cars were in the driveway.

The sun was glowing through the greenery
and I could picture us on the front lawn mowing the grass backwards
in bare feet, kissing behind the picnic table

I want to make peace with this city
but Warrensville and Fairmount and Cedar
South Green, South Taylor, South Belvoir
Mayfield, and Larchmere and Lee

Scarborough, Coventry, Richmond
Meadowbrook, Miramar, and Washington

aren't just street names
And it feels wrong driving home alone.

I want to make peace with this city
but I don't know why I hate it so much.

It never did anything to me
except expect me to survive.