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A Memorial

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A MEMORIAL

By: Autumn Franz

I am learning to let go of the small objects of my past, that cry
to be placed in a box and given away:

the track sweatshirt with your name spelled wrong,
a broken bracelet of a Jesse's tree, and that rusting necklace.

You held my hand in the living room
while my dad got drunk in the garage, let me cry,
let me tell you how I'm a
WORTHLESS DUMBASS
HYPOCRITICAL WHORE

and you say I will never touch you the way they have,
and I believe him. My wrists in his hands,
my head slammed against the wall.

Then your mouth churned with new words like vomit, found new ways to
string together my disaster,

Texted me drunk on Saint Patrick's Day, years
after I finally learned how to pull your noose
of abuse off from around my neck.

You say you will sacrifice to love me, I say
I never really forgave you,
you say it's been
years.

I still have a blue box filled with dried flowers
from all of our high school dances, cursive love letters
you slipped in my locker— I build memorials

to bad love, worship still at the altar of men
who know how to leave scars where no one
will see them. But one day I will set it all

on fire.