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# MIRAGE

The poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson once wrote 'tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all. / The house became an archive of us: the left side of the bed, pictures on the refrigerator, the blue ballpoint pen on my desk, a half-eaten pint of ice cream, and your hairs that I sometimes find when folding clean laundry, mistakenly woven among cotton threads. Traces of you linger like ghosts, premonitions awaiting in cabinets and closets, the way the sensation of a kiss lingers on the neck; specks of dust always regather no matter how many times I wipe them away. / Last night, I sprawled out in the middle of the bed and said a prayer for a sleep so deep that I dreamt you were calling for me from above the surface of the Atlantic. / I still find myself picking up after you. I cleaned the fridge, thoroughly, both inside and out. I ate the

rest of your ice cream and took down every picture and note from the fridge, scrubbing and wiping until I could see my distorted reflection. / I found one of your hairs when pulling the laundry out of the dryer, unraveled it from the heap, set it aside atop the dryer, and let it be while I folded the towels in the way that you preferred. / I like to think that you left your sweater behind as an extension of an olive branch in lieu of the goodbye that never came. I washed it in cold water and hung it up next to the wind chime we got in Montauk. / I took care when making the bed this morning—tight corners, folded down sheets, and a kiss placed on your pillow—welcoming and waiting for you, just in case. / I wrote my grocery list with the blue ballpoint pen you gave me: ibuprofen, dryer sheets, ice cream. I stuck it back up on the fridge along with the photo of us that I disliked but you loved: me in the blue dress with my least favorite side of my face towards the camera and you kissing it with a love that seems almost unfamiliar to me now. / We'll put the pictures back up. We'll make the bed together and fold the laundry. We'll kiss each other goodnight and I'll let you hold me while we sleep.



Mother in her chair with her cherry stained lips, all smudged and out of character. With every tear shed, she cries out for her long gone happiness that she has since feigned.

Father wears a smile that seems so trained, and places a hand dear mother's fur shawl: a mechanical motion that whirrs, a false display of love that fell unsustainable.



Call up the neighbors and tell them about the pool, the kids, the job, Sunday's dinner and how everything is as it should be.

Mother fixes her makeup and her pout, father stands tall and remains a grinner, and both agree to disagree silently.