

Knotted

By Cheryl Snow White

I can't believe how heavy my high heels feel
straps twisted around my fingers
The asphalt is cracked and wet with dew
I tiptoe barefooted
I am just now coming home
I watch the ground as I walk
My feet our new to concrete
This summer season has
peeked its head out so far
the pollen has already begun to
hang in the humid air

I creep up the stairs like a chameleon
hoping last nights eyeliner and the apparent lacking of my bra
is not a dead give away of my recent endeavors
I will turn my key over and close the door
the same quiet way I did when sneaking out as a teenager
It is funny how those skills developed from
fear become instinct
I guess I could say that I have never really been caught
I must move like light
brightly so if someone sees, they are
blinded before recognition can occur

I will wash my face in the bathroom, gargle and
avoid the mirror
with its harsh fluorescent light
I will pull dark curtains over the window
wish that I hadn't lost my silk sleeping blindfold
and brush knots out of my hair before curling up alone

I once received an expensive chenille throw for Christmas
I would only use it for special occasions
and each morning I would wake up and
untangle all of it frayed tassels

It was my payment

Now I force myself to brush my hair
knowing that it will pull my scalp
knowing that my hair hates the pillowcases of strangers
It will fold in upon itself a
as if trying to return my strength to my brain
trying to hide my beauty that I give away so easily

I would bet money that someone has
found strands of my red in their bed months after
I have left their senses
This is my penance
and the only moment I allow regret to enter my conscious mind

It is funny how self-respect is two-sided
It can be flipped like a coin
tossed through smoke filled bars
to land in shot glasses
If left untouched it can corrode with leftover lemon peels
or it can be taken home with strangers
sometimes they polish it before they drop it in their pockets

Sometimes I find it in the bottom of my purse next to
my good black push up bra
Thankful that I did not leave it on a nightstand
like my favorite necklace
now sleeping at a house that I will never again see

It is actually wonderful how you can
forget how you got somewhere
And it is wonderful to
feel the earth touch my skin as I walk
with my heavy high heels dangling from my finger

Mornings like this come more often than I do

Increments of Five

By Cheryl Snow White

The days on my sunglasses are numbered
in increments of five to be exact
because they were purchased on a Monday when I was supposed to be at work
and Monday is the second day of the week
and they cost me fifteen dollars
that divided by five equals three
and three and two make five
and thus five is all that remains

like the five days I have to wait to wake up next to him
or the five months since I last saw my dollar store sunglasses
or the five ways he can break into a laugh
short and pitched
quick like tattoo outlines leaving permanent marks upon my flesh
And all I can do is blush
red, like my nail polish
because I am so self-conscious I have forgotten how to kiss

But he
he kisses me in five minute increments
long and wet
Drawn out like animated storyboards
complete with foreshadowing and flashback
There is something distinctly theatrical within him
and he is developing something

brewing concocting

stirring something

in his mind

in my bed

between my thighs

I haven't heard the complete plot line yet

but I have suspended my beliefs

hung them over the curtains to block the sun

hung them in the air next to his laugh

and included his smell into my vocabulary

Allowed his noises to echo and burn in the silent

space between film and light

life and reality

the walls and my heart

This laugh, this kiss burning like cigarettes thrown from car

windows when driving home from outlet malls on days you skipped work

they resemble sparklers so bright

that these sunglasses are merely a tool for distraction not protection.