

SIMPLE SYRUP

MADDIE DEPREE

I

In Spanish,
we learn “estar enamorado”
instead of “ser enamorado”
because being in love is a condition that can change.
When you visit,
you bring me twelve roses and two pints of ice cream.
You’re more than sorry, you’re
SORRY SORRY SORRY
angry, because
It wasn’t my idea
insistent, and
I swear to God, I’ve told you everything
and I forgive you because
It was just one mistake.
Later, we learn “empearar” –
to get worse.

II

The temperature rises through October.
Finally,
the heat presses against your face
exposing
the humiliation of young adulthood,
the rawness of your fingertips,
your bare ego, scraping itself
against the moon
until it breaks its skin and bleeds.
Two years pass,
and you won’t meet my eyes,

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won't accept the small movement of my mouth
telling you
it's time to leave now,
there's nothing left to say.
You drive home alone.
Your mother holds you.

III

I unfollow you and your parents on Facebook
so I won't see your face unexpectedly.
I think about church camps,
Oreo milkshakes, Johnny B. Goode,
loveseats,
my head resting
against the cradle of your hip bones for the first time.
It was some night in June.
I think about you
lifting me onto my bed by my thighs,
the reflection of my warm legs in the mirror.
You, turning away afterward
Because
I don't want to talk about this.

IV

Three weeks go by
and my tests come up negative.
At his request,
you mail my dad two twenties
and a note that says, "I am truly sorry."
He calls it pathetic.
I tell him that you are not a bad person.
The next day I walk back to my dorm at 1:30 a.m.
to breathe, take a shower.
I wonder if you sleep before or after Pennsylvania.
My chest rattles

and my roommate says it sounds like bronchitis.
I don't cry. I wash my hands more.

V

One night I pray for you to die.
I fantasize about leaving you behind,
watching Atlanta become the size of a dime,
eating airline peanuts on my own
and thinking of you
not at all.
On the other side of the world,
I will hold my face in my hands,
watching
the enormity of everything, the people dressed in black,
my own feet moving
across the pavement,
and finally,
Thank God
I will embrace
the glorious absence of you.