



Comma

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Accepted: 1 January 2024 / Published online: 23 February 2024

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when my great grandmother
was in a comma, i wrote a poem
at her bedside

something about roses and *Tang*,
the clinking spoon, collard greens and
candy stores i stole 5-cent gum from –
apologies and grace;
a basement where my father
slept off the lows of high life,
of trucking;
something about the way
time passes, a pollen of sorts
working its way through rain
towards infinity
or the oil slick rainbow
beneath his white Coupe Deville
with curb feelers and
blue suede, a door too heavy
to open alone ||

when i saw her, i thought
of those curb feelers;
eyes closed, tubes in nose

i imagined them: sentimental, sentinels
scanning, feeling around, loosening,
pulling away her memories –

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the work of a soft palm
on a chest growing tired
of rising ||

memories she forgot she remembered,
the ones that begin like fairytales and end
with a comma, an empty page, a heavy door
waiting for someone to open it ||

i wanted to open it || all 90lbs of me
crouched beneath a squat rack trying
to rise above the weight of a silence
i was too child, too unknowing to probe;
my tiny quads strong enough for
reverse layups, strong enough to hold
my body upright to touch her hand
and nothing more ||

i wrote a poem,
a grammatically incorrect poem
in green ink that wondered
something about the time
it takes to find the right questions –
an entrance to her memories before
the tubes got there, before i learned
how history lodges itself
in the body,
how time passes itself
between lips ||

before i learned how to correctly use
an ellipsis, i learned my index finger
can curve into a comma
around thumbs that once opened
band aids for me;
that a comma
and a coma
are not that different after all //

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