

There is loss in everything. Winter gives  
me new shape, both of us raw against  
existence, both of us bare. We're invisible  
or invincible, closer to our ends than begin-  
nings. I find myself kneeling to better  
examine small things, find solace within  
myself, marvel at how steel breaks stone,  
bone.

On Reading Thoreau, Again

Like crows they rise in a violence  
against the sky, a dark constellation,  
until they were flying, turning, turning  
into the sun, losing themselves  
in distance, weaving into a black  
scarf until they unraveled westward,  
taking with them what I'd once dreamed  
for myself, all I believed and now  
cannot name.

On Bridges I've Dreamed of Jumping From

The last time we were alone together,  
you nicked a vein, on purpose,  
I think, on your face while shaving;  
I might have touched it. You held  
the wound apart. You didn't want  
healing. *Wet. Slick.* A rare masterpiece.  
You must remember the last time I watched  
you bleed helpless in the face of your loss,  
how I thought a superhero Band-aid  
would have been enough.

On Shaving

Sometimes, when it rains in my dreams,  
you come to me in your mother's dress.  
We dance together. You grin like a woman  
who knows who she is. I taste the damp-  
ness  
of your lips, and your beauty evaporates  
into things darker than the spaces between  
stars. This is how our love burns, bodies  
aching, lips throbbing, rusty joints twisting,  
squealing, bare flesh soaked in kerosene,  
primal instincts rising from the mattress.

On Sex

*Please recycle to a friend!*

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On Coming of Age

Ariana D. Den Bleyker © 2014



## On Coming of Age



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I asked, "Why have I received only this.  
A voice replied, "only 'this' will lead you to that."

~ Rumi

### On Coming of Age

I stood on the front porch, palms extended  
to catch the drops. I ran down the steps,  
splashed onto the street, caught more drops  
in my mouth, my thin, floral sundress  
clinging to my body, heavy braids weighing  
down on my shoulders in the hot August  
dampness—before I was old enough to shave  
my legs, wear a bra, apply heavy black eye-  
liner, before I knew how morning sex  
could smell like a raging storm.