

**ONE PURPOSE OF POETRY**

There is that moment when the world twists  
the lover gone or the sister dead,  
graduation day, or just an address change  
Life teeters and you don't know if you exist.  
The stomach quivers and the calves ache  
How can the tide come in or the grass grow?  
The light cannot be the same; and surely  
the stars do not know how to glow.  
There is the flash of possible escape  
I will part my hair into even plaits  
I will laugh at nothing, or eat more beetles.  
I do not have to be myself.  
Then the grumbling starts deep down low  
It will be worse -  
the sun will curdle, the earth stop its spin.  
friends will fade, and the bones gradually thin.  
Your hollow core is what will grow.

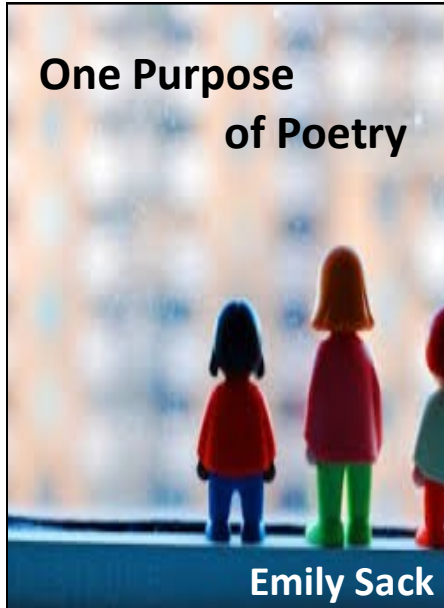
**VERSUS**

Verses of versus I write  
As opposed to,  
against my better judgment.  
  
Life isn't black vs. white  
up against down, don't make  
me choose red or green.  
  
Life is and, and if,  
and but. And yet,  
there is a peace  
to certainty, to knowing  
against not. To be saved,  
or not.  
  
So should I relent  
or should I fight on?  
Am I angry or just stubborn?  
Smart or dense? Sensitive or  
merely weak.

Finally the sailboats drift as they should  
And the air does not feel overly cold  
The grit in the coffee tastes right to the tongue  
And your heart beats its usual song.  
So you loosen your belt into the ease of the same.  
And then the smell of bacon smells of him,  
a paper on the desk shouts her name.  
The twist of the key sounds of other rooms.  
But you paper your skin over the bruises  
and swallow the nausea that boils your innards,  
rap your heart in blankets, and gingerly step inward  
pick up your pen and try to make words.

**UNTITLED**

On the lowest rung of  
The ladder to the attic  
I pause and lean back  
On my heels  
To see the top step quiver  
Against the floorboard  
And imagine in the midst of  
The old schoolbooks,  
The folded cardboard tables  
The laminated pictures,  
An apartment my parents had  
Sixty years ago.  
Their bedroom was an attic  
Just like this. With rough  
Wood made for splinters  
And eves where bags  
Of stuffing leaked out  
Always so dark with only  
The String light bulb holding  
Up the Ceiling.



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