

It's become a permanent thing, this ache in my chest when I wake up.

It's March and suddenly I am apologizing to the month. I am saying *I'm sorry I doubted you* because it feels like there has never been a lovelier month. Some days the clouds cross the sky and yes, those days are gray, but sometimes the sun shines so expansive and warm I can't help but exhale. *It's March*, I think. *It's never been lovelier.*

Under this expansive sun I walk home from class and I am mourning days that haven't even happened yet. I am thinking *I will miss this even when I can't remember what I am missing*. It's become something of a game to me, how many things I can notice that fill me up so much I don't know how to move forward.

Look, my mind says *look there*. There's the trees we hammocked in on those impossibly warm late April days. There's the building I once cried in after a bad exam and there's the table I ate grilled cheese at every Tuesday last year. There's the curb I was kissed at once and I fell asleep smiling and there's the gutter C threw up in one St. Patrick's day and it was kind of green and we laughed till our stomachs hurt. There's where I fell asleep once and got that sunburn so bad it lasted a whole summer. *I was here*, it all says *I lived and I loved*.

I have made a home here and it feels like the first thing that has ever been truly mine. I drink wine with my friends on Thursdays and we make each other laugh. R braids my hair for work with the deft hands of a sister and C tells me *you could be at your worst and I would still love talking to you* and sometimes when I get home they have washed my dishes without me asking and it feels so cavernous, this love. So purposeful. They do not have to love me this way but they do. *I choose you*, they say and I don't know how to tell them I would choose them back in any lifetime. One million times over.

We unpack the groceries and I try to loosen my grip on the days because they slip past so easily I might as well let them fall on their own. It has become a permanent thing, this ache in my chest because I don't know how not to grieve every beautiful moment that passes.

Tell me about a time you overcame difficulty, says my career prep professor and I want to tell her that once my mom had this plant she loved so much she treated it like one of her kids. I mean really, really loved it. She watered it every day at the same time and moved it around the house to follow the sun and picked off any brown leaves that threatened the stalk. When we moved across the country she had to leave it behind and out of everything she had to say goodbye to, I think that small cruelty was perhaps one of the worst.

Sometimes I wake up and I feel like every moment I give away to the always hungry passage of time feels like that. That small cruelty. I can't just keep this one thing I love.

Because it's already March. And it is beautiful. And the month is saying *I choose you. I choose you. I choose you.*

Well, March. The days will just keep coming, won't they?
I choose you back.