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Category: Poetry

Extremities

In your mother's womb. In your crib before flight. When tripping and skinning your knees before walking to the post office minutes away from your childhood home. When pressing the doorbell and remembering it's been broken for fifteen years, so why are you only now trying? At the dinner table waiting for the smash of glass against wood, for the hands to pull your shorts down, for the plastic hangers cracked in half. In the elevator, towel cradling little broken bones. Gradual misshapings of the body. At different traffic lights, crossing the white lines right as the yellow blends into red. In the hospital, waiting to be plastered, to be paid attention to. Unwrapping your cast in the bathroom, and then tying plastic bags around your right arm in the shower. Back in your mother's bedroom, trying on her favorite yellow dresses, so big on you they dip to the floor. Stumbling and crashing against the drawer so that your mother presses a towel-wrapped ice cube to the side of your head. Later, holding her hand at the train station before a man unzips your backpack but finds nothing inside of you. Making eye contact with yourself through the train doors, and through your mother's bathroom mirror, and then years later in the reflections created by yellow lamps hanging in a bookstore in a city you've never seen before. Of liminal spaces. Of that sharp intake of breath before you both turn away. For that other shoe to drop, for them to cross over to tap you on the shoulder and say *hello*. Later, at different airports, playing Solitaire, walking into bookstores, taking your wallet out to pretend that you have money to buy anything, slicing your thumb on the crisp corner of a one-dollar bill. Before crossing the airport check-in counters, before boarding the plane, before your winter coat snags on the hooks in the restroom. For whenever you leave, get out of bed, wash your face and then stare at your nose in the mirror. You fumble

with your bra clasps, pull a shirt on, blink twice
then yawn. You're different now. You've arrived.