

Lynn Fica

Age: 17, Grade: 12

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Category: Poetry

The Rainbow in What You Can't Change

r. cuts; burns; match tips on skin and burning hair; her dress; the way your face goes red right before you cry; hot water; nosebleeds; *i'd recommend pressing charges if it were an adult* keeping your mouth shut; high school; your locker across from hers; biology class; begging them to take you seriously; police reports; now you're taking too long; *let's make sure you keep your story straight* your teacher's eyes trying to read what you're writing from across the table; phone calls; waiting; the second hand on the clocks at school; waiting; the wall next to the bathroom you're hiding in; waiting; the crescendo of cymbals in your ears when the prosecution doesn't want the case anyway.

o. pill bottles; pencils; the date on the calendar; you used to have a calendar on your computer that was bright orange; you pressed an arrow and it skipped over halloween; because it was your anniversary; pumpkins; *you don't have it anymore*; igniting lighters; *you can't skip it anymore*; the rewind button for your old vcr; *you can't do anything anymore*; the color of your room when the power goes out.

y. lights; summer; dandelion crowns you used to make in the park behind your house; sunshine; when you stop thinking; sticky notes; you turn into the wrong person; her favorite character; the person she wanted; the words *good job*; she's been gone for years; *but that* you is still curled up underneath your skin; between your ribs; sucking out plasma; when it unfurls your bones break; isn't that *funny*; *how do you function?*

g. vomit; bile; stomach acid; the meds that don't make you sick but you wish did; you have to monitor what you take with them; excuses; the smell of dying; surgery; the view from your bed in the hospital; the window too high up on the wall to see out of; your roommate's name; *heaven in the mirror*; the orderlies opening your bedroom door in the middle of the night; flashlights through the cracks in the wall; crying because you're miserable here; screaming down the hallway; the stack of books on your desk that you'll never read; going home.

b. air; water; blue is harder because it's hers before the red came; her sweaters; her nails; her glasses; the way everything fits together in little color-coded boxes; because it has to; because *this* color is the good memories and *that* one is the bad ones; oxymoronic shades of grey; meeting her; the cold before you scald yourself; rain; the drawings you used to do for her that now you can't look at; the way she's in your house even when she's not; the pile of her clothes at the top of the stairs; the sky while you burn what she left behind.

i. rocks; waves against the cliffside; the jagged end that you take to the stomach; water, too; bathwater; drowning; storms over the pacific; veins on your eyelids after the burst blood vessels heal; muffled crying into pillows; deteriorating; *how does a girl rape someone*; saying *no*; saying *no* but no one listens; saying *no* but she's deaf all the sudden; too busy promising she'll love you but never coming through.

v. bruises; seeing stars; almost making out a face in the dark; insomnia; the smell of lavender candles; the piece that's missing; the nightmares; loving more than you've ever been loved; shattered glass; perfect futures with clean edges that never come; playing pretend just so she's happy with you; talking about a wedding you never want to go to; *cheating*; *blackmail*; *sexual assault*; all the nasty things *she* did to *you* she tells everyone *you* did to *her*; *i only did it because i cared about you*; being told that you're lying; regretting that you can't just shut up like she wanted; the list of abusive behaviors on your therapist's desk; feeling like a monster; never getting better; ruining your own happiness; *if you really loved her why did you say no* knowing the look that means they don't believe you; burning

in humiliation that stings the back of your eyes until you're crying; wishing that you never said anything at all;
disappointing endings.