

Seasonal Affect

Wind measures, then halves us
in February's haul & chug.

Our teeth grow sideways,
the hallway's blown-out bulbs
a long falling of streetlights,
candles set in snow-laden trees.
We hold the vision of forest fire
close as a lover.

The city is suspended in a drop of water
a building in the city etched on a coin in my hand:
warm dram to slide across the tongue.

Winter isn't an eye itself but where the gaze
falls, the curve of light by which
stories close darker around themselves.

Across the street, a ship glazed in ice
sails through a window left ajar. A table upends itself.
Faces blur as snow shaken with salt.

On our corner, someone strikes a match
to make out a face. A block away, a boy reading
under a gingham sheet flicks out
his flashlight to listen to the terrible
chattering trail from deeper in the house.

In the bedroom where we float,
all doors open to black. Our shared air
is our air, tracking melted circles around itself.

Branches grow over the faces of our dead.
Taking a breath as a branch snapping.

Early dark: the hunkering by which things start
to go wrong, soundtrack music
blown to shards, our figures staccato curls
receding singed from the mouth of the girl
singing as she walks to work.

This is not a movie. Every seven minutes,
our bathtub drips & the miniature city
explodes. The hall smells like the hall.
Our air leaves rings pressed into our skin,
as glasses on a table.

Group Portrait, Year Of The Gramophone Full Of Whiskey

Girls who swarm in high school parking lots
like static, girls who eat everything
with their fingers, who shoplifted
their prom dress, who burst
like pipes, girls who burned down
the Dairy Queen, who bury
money in the floorboards
and bottles in their bras, girls who sell knives
and their time.

Girls who will take
a punch or a hit
of anything you offer,
whose voices crack
like linoleum, who die
down like rain, who are spilling
like Styrofoam cups, falling like snow in August.
Who'll tell you about their dads
beating them, but never
their real age. Girls who are blooming
like a headache.

Going To The Mall With You

I would roll my eyes at the teenage boys
outside the double doors making blowjob motions
just sidle right past them
to get our ears pierced at Claire's.
I would squeeze your hand so tight
when the girl punches the glass diamond into your ear.
I'd carve your name into the bathroom wall.
I would miss all the previews.
I'd model every pair of wedges Payless has.
Let's make out in each stall of every dressing room.
I would shoplift anything for you.
I would crimp my hair so cute.
Don't get up, just sit there at the plastic table
in the food court by the stopped carousel
and I will gather all the free samples twice around,
then bring them back to you.

Nina Puro's work is forthcoming or recently appeared in *cream city review*, *Harpur Palate*, *Indiana Review*, *Jellyfish*, *Pleiades*, *Third Coast*, and other publications. The recipient of an MFA from Syracuse University, she lives in Brooklyn, works in publishing, and is bad at thinking of clever third-person quips to put in places like this.