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Dream of Goldfish Encounter Letter

Charlie Samuya Veric

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removed from the traffic of daily drama
enacted on the road. Her hands shake
 profanities at passersby and drivers,
who may or may not deserve them.
 They pretend not to look as she hooks
 thumbs into the garter of her shorts
and crouches down for relief.
No smugness leaks from her face,
 just a puddle staining the asphalt
yellow beneath her, refusing erasure.
 When she stands, the static of rain falling
 dares anyone to applaud.

Letter

Was she thinking: grief
is a letter you mail to yourself

once the turnstile's been turned
x or so number of times

at the train station? The delay
is necessary, is chosen in advance

for a day like this, when she pushes
the door open into a room

made immaculate, and relatives
made inquisitive, by an infant's

early death. The father lets out
facts one at a time: heart failure.

Two days of life. Less than one hour
for the cremation. The periods

like steel clicking into place.
She hears the footsteps of a man

who hands the ashes back
in a white envelope, to the mother

who accepts it with the calm
of a commuter holding a ticket

to a train ride that will carry her
farthest from the right address.

CHARLIE SAMUYA VERIC

Song

The shining blue water
of the infinity pool has the sky in it.
There is a cloud over the valley and the church bells toll in the
distance.

What have I lost to the days?

I was not my grandmother's favorite. The neighbors
in my town I knew as a child
their deaths I hear now as news in the morning. And if

I went home, I would forget
the names of streets and birds, the look of fields
from the highway, the cliffs looking down on houses.

How they love the heavens opening above them,
those sloping mountains.
How isolated they are: how single
in their isolation.

The valley knows the sky so well—
they come to shape the void between them.