blue room

a zuihitsu by M Cole
‘All I’ve got is a little bit of space and time, drawing shapes and lines of the world we made’
-Mac Miller

For Maddie and John
march again
john was first gay person i ever met,
and the first i knew to die.
unless my uncle was gay,
and maybe he was.

i felt guilty that i had to double check the spelling of his last name when i found out.

dinner was chewier than it normally is.
flank steak instead of ribeye
i don’t know what the names of steaks mean
my dad always bought whatever was cheapest
and burnt it black in the oven with no seasoning
because, that’s how i like it.

you can’t just ask someone, “how did they die”
you have to meticulously look through everything posted
and piece it together on your own
unless you’re family.

when you are,
it’s dreams about babies dissolving,
people folding into suitcases
and not knowing if you’re awake or asleep.

i don’t want to go to a baby funeral.
i don’t want to see a miniature casket.
i don’t want to hear how the baby will never play baseball
or write an award winning essay.

all of the snow is melted except for the lumps of dirty ice
that were shoveled too high.
it looks like it’s raining
the ice is just melting off the parking structure.

i can feel the space between my teeth
when i suck air into my mouth
even though i had braces twice before high school.
i’ve been drinking smoothies every day
and adding more grease to my food,

i’m scared of cats
the same way i’m scared of
lizard or snakes,
but not the same way i’m scared of hospitals.

wait,
where did everyone go?

i don’t think you brushed your hair a day in your life.

nelson told me daffodils are the first flowers to bloom in spring
and are nicknamed the death flower.
it’s march in new york
the sun shined for the first time the day after you died.
i’ve never hated daffodils more.

my twin and i are getting vaccinated
on st patrick’s day.
in different time zones.
my friends joked they would cancel each other out.

i cough up chunky grey globs every morning
shrimp tails look like toenails
my professor's dog has teeth that look like they were drawn on by a kindergartner
not everything living is worth seeing.

i sat in the school library all day hoping to see someone who knew you
searching for any semblance that we knew each other
my heart hurts more than normal today
it's harder to swallow than normal
i keep imagining your
tangled ratty hair,
as free as you were.
i haven't been able to brush mine since i found out.

i never liked the name maddie because it sounds too much like maggie.
but for the first time i'm glad our names sound alike.

i could swallow
seeing you in a dress,
pink cheeks,
and mascara,

but they brushed your hair.

drove a little drunk in your honor last night
and wondered if i meant more to you than i knew.

i keep thinking the thoughts
i didn't think when i found out:
where was she?
what shirt was she wearing?
did she listen to a song before she died?
was she tangled in her earbuds?
i heard a line in a song that sank deep into my heart—
“the day i met you i started dreaming”

you are the cool breeze on a sweaty day
and every indulgence feels guilty without you.

not all poetry has to be palatable to my
mom (sorry mom).
i wrote a whole book called picking scabs
and i still can’t stop ripping the scabs
off my bashed-in knees.

tulips bulbs are dormant all winter
they save up their energy
to grow their roots deep into the earth.
not everything dead isn’t living.

there’s a life in the mailbox.

bandaids on every finger
feeling more held together than i have in a while

your mom sent me your plaid red jeans
covered in purple and yellow paint
along with one of your soccer jerseys.
the number one will never be the same.

how can something smell like time?

went to the park where the murderer
amelia wrote to would meet with his cult
to take my graduation pictures
i dabbed my bloody knee with a tissue
it looks like a smile.
the train sounded like it was giving birth.

no one told me my graduation would mean
making a slideshow of pictures of my dead friend.

thin black hair
pasted in raw honey
sits on the floor like another knot of wood.
my hair stands straight up if it isn’t caressed
in the shower each morning
drying out my lips licking the corners
the chapstick is never where i need it to be.

so many of my dreams exist in the same universe
once liam asked me,
how do you know it’s not a real place?
since then i’ve been trying to piece the map together
in time and physicality,,,,,,,,,

fingernail biting
is my worst addictive tendency.
aside from binge drinking
incessant weed smoking
and zit picking.

the sound of scratching dry skin,
splitting nails,
or teeth slamming together
getting tattooed,
my partner’s cat biting me,
barbed wire cutting my legs,

i’m still having trouble shedding the skin that fit me months ago
it’s still growing
i hope it fits soon

questions that keep me up at night:
-why do my boobs take up half of my body?
-beans on toast seems disgusting, but beans on a quesadilla is one of my favorite snacks, am i a hypocrite?
-i always want another glass of wine, does that make me an alcoholic?
-how many realities are there?
-why do only segments of songs get stuck in my head?
-why does drinking tea and coffee dehydrate you if it’s just flavored water?
-does the tattoo on my forearm look too big?
-my mom promises i’ll regret my tattoos when i’m older. will i?
-if i melt a penny, can i make a new penny with the same material?
-101 dalmatians taught me that many dogs look like their owners. since i’ve gotten fred he’s gained a big pot belly. is he mimicking me?
-if i wear a shirt and get it sweaty, then leave it out to dry, is it clean or dirty?
-what is being “california sober”?
-i don’t know what mirrors are made of, i used to think it was glass, but we can see through glass, so what is it made of?
-what do you dream about?
-is it better to underwork or overwork?
-does picking scabs or plucking hair freak you out more?
twins i know exist:

**danica and mariah**
- my 2nd grade club 'roots and shoots' helped fundraise for danica’s make a wish.
- danica was deficient in bone marrow, and the only person who could donate to her was mariah.
- i thought mariah was an angel.
- danica had her surgery and got her ‘make a wish’ to stay in an ice hotel in switzerland
- i wanted cancer so i could have my make a wish happen after i met danica.
- mariah and danica both had such droopy faces, and eyes. i thought it was because of the cancer when i was younger, now i know that's just how some people's faces look.
- in high school i had a mutual friend with danica and we used to hang out in Ethan Bailey’s backyard and shotgun beers. i couldn't believe she was the same girl who went to the ice hotel.

**amaryllis and dorinda**
- identical; dorinda had a chipped front left tooth
- they both had long choppy haircuts; amaryllis cut her hair so she was the short-haired twin. then dorinda cut hers the next week.
- food crumbs permanently resided on in between the folds of both of their mouths
- they both wore olive green sweatshirts when it was cold in the morning.
- caked dirt under their nails
- sticky hands grabbing at dry erase markers
- they both always had matted hair
- dorinda told everyone she owned the biggest slide on the play structure so no one else could use it.

**kendall and taylor**
- matching Juicy Couture tracksuits
- dyed blonde hair
- identical; kendall had a mole right here on her face.
- their lipgloss always looked too sticky
- fuzzy notebooks
- bubblegum pink was their signature color
- their mom had multiple different colored BMWs she would pick the twins up in.
- both such snotty little brats
- their last name is Christianson, and everyone called them ‘the Christian-shits’

**ally and emmy**
- the set of twins that was most like me and elliot
- they had air hockey and pool tables in their basement. i never knew people could have a ‘game rooms’ in their house.
- their dad was the coach of almost every recreational soccer team i played on.
- ally used to scream that i was ‘playing too hard’ against her.
- emmy had an eye patch when we met, and i thought she was blind. she’s not.
- i had to stand close to emmy to hear what she was saying.
- ally’s shrill scream still lives in my head
- their house was at the end of a windy street lined with lemon trees.
- they had a hamster named ‘checkers’ and he died when ally squeezed him too hard
- their crazy mom, trish, was our girl scout leader.

**jacob and lindsey**
- jacob and lindsey told me and elliot that they were born 5 minutes apart, and i was so excited; my mom told me elliot and i were 5 minutes apart too.
- we were all in mrs. Sanders class together, she was obsessed with bees, so the whole classroom was yellow.
- we got hershey’s kisses for rewards that we all hoarded in our dirty desks
- in high school jacob brought wine in a plastic bottle to my house
- jacob has a full-time job now, and he owns a tesla that he named ‘snowflake’
- lindsey told me they were test tube babies. i didn’t know what that meant. she told me i was probably a test tube baby too (im not)
- both of them have the most rosy cheeks all the time
- lindsey shoved jacob into their sliding glass door and shattered his arm.
- our names were in alphabetical order: jacob, k****, lindsey, and maggie. (k**** is elliot now)
tierra and tiana
-ponytails pulled back so tight that made their skin looked stretched
-their dad drove a giant black Escalade that i thought was a limo
-cheer team captains
-neon purple nail and hair extensions
-identical; i never knew them well enough to be able to tell them apart.
-both of them were always wearing TOMS shoes that don't look good on anyone.
-they always gave me similar energy as a fairy.
-background characters in everyone's life

ealiana and noah
-i went to Jewish preschool with them, they were a year below me
-i had dance class with eliana in high school; she was better than everyone combined.
-noah had light-up barney shoes that elliot was jealous of
-in high school we had ‘dance offs’ between juniors and seniors, and eliana got brand new bright pink tap shoes that weren't broken in all the way. she fell.
-eliana ‘ass’-ner (krasner)

madi and sammi
-we played softball together on a team that was purple. we were called the pink panthers
-their mom was the youth group leader at the church down the street.
-she did nails at the salon next to the pizza place we went to.
-we all played wii bowling together and drank root beer floats.
-we had a burping contest, and one of them almost threw up. i don't remember which one it was.

daniel and elisa
-elisa brought full vodka bottles in her backpack to school and nothing else.
-daniel got suspended for smoking behind the school with john carlo during lunch.
-they both used to smoke in the school bathrooms without getting caught.
-their parents were hippies and would walk around the neighborhood barefoot with unleashed dogs.
- daniel lived in a shed outside his parents house so he could smoke without them knowing.
- i bought weed from daniel for a while when he dated a friend (used lightly) of mine.
- elisa shaved her head, pierced her tongue, and got a face tattoo right before junior year started.

**emily and chris mcdaniel**

- we would hop the fence behind our elementary school to get to mariana’s house for spanish tutoring.
- emily had a giant birthmark on her forehead that looked like some milk spilled on her.
- she was friends with a girl named rachel kolb, which sounded too much like cole.
- chris was dating who everyone called ‘weird mary’

**kyle and kevin**

- roundy-dingley was their last name
- i was in spanish ii with one of them, not sure which because he never came.
- they both had pimply skin
- crusty and crunchy looking, but still slimy at the same time
- they always wore plain white t shirts and blue jeans

**abigail and isabelle**

- abigail is late to every class i’ve ever had with her. she always carried a black mug full of something hot
- one of the only twins i’ve met in college
- adrienne told me when they lived with abigail she would leave plates of ketchup out until the room reeked of vinegar.
- most of abigail’s poetry is filled with religion jokes. she’s the first person who made me appreciate that type of humor.
- i don’t know isabelle as well, but i think we are more alike.
- abigail is friends with gaby, who dated my best friend, who’s not my best friend now.
- their grandparents own a pizza restaurant in colorado.
mrs peterson and her twin
-the only adult twins i’ve ever known.
-mrs peterson was my 4th and 5th grade teacher (so i get those years confused a lot)
-they’re identical, mrs peterson’s hair was blonder, and she had a pointer nose.
-i met her twin at a halloween carnival, and i thought it was my teacher in a costume.
-she was the first teacher to give elliot a left handed desk
-they both had the tightest lips, it looked like they had just bitten into a lemon slice.

what i hear from my computer as i fall asleep:
“what are you, the cheese keeper?”
“you’re not a good listener”
“you can never know everything about a person”
“at least i know who i am, but i may have changed seven times since this morning”
“i would rather have oblivion than be alone”
“love is not an excuse”
“if only a man could spit his past out as easily as brushing his teeth”
“it was the moon that bore you”
“caught in a rooster coop”
“he’s not a good man, he’s a rich man”
“sometimes the feelings in me get messy like dirt”
“everyone i know is in poor, in jail, or gone”

my life has always been divided into twos. two cakes at one birthday party, two straws for one milkshake, my half of the bed and yours. my dad told me when i get to college i would meet the people and make the connections that would be my lifelong friends, in my mind i’ve known brittney my whole life. she’s the friend i was always told i would have. in one of britney’s first letters to me, she told me the way she approached writing, was answering one question, “how can i release these thoughts in a way that will make my soul feel lighter?” well talking to brittney makes my soul feel lighter.
when mourning comes
by brittney & maggie

when mourning comes
it comes like morning
expected
but always surprising.
unwelcome
when we are content with being asleep.

when morning comes,
after the mourning before,
pain takes the color from the sun,
yet intensifies
its blaze.
taste is mute
and sound is bitter.

i close the window at night
so i dont wake up to smells
of my neighbors breakfast
seeping in.
somehow i still smell onions
when i wake up.

raw onions for breakfast
the morning after,
mourning,
and
crying
incited by exposed
layers.
at 85,
dad lost his sense of taste.
he would pile ketchup, salt, and hot sauce
on all his food,
so he could taste something.

and now
we chase morning rays
in hopes to vanquish
the sour taste
of this mournings
news.

im sore now in the mornings.
i thought it was from all the squats.
my body knows you’re gone.
muscle memory.

memories of morning glories
in full bloom
fade
with the mourning,
glory.
we shall strive to get through
this summertime winter.

making pottery
names like june, august, and april
are my favorite.
i like words that make time feel tangible.

i never thought a word would be embedded in me,
your words though—
that’s different.

i’ve become closer to brittney through two months of letters
than most of my life long friends.

text i got from my brother:
\textit{once you learn how to drive, do you figure out how to stay at the same speed? i’m either going way too fast or slow}

i went to school with nelson for 3 months,
i lived with becky for 3 years.
time isn’t a reflection of love.

i’ve learned
you can bite your fingernails
but not your toenails.

closing one eye,
i can’t see half of what’s in front of me
my poetry professor asked,
\textit{who taught you to see?}

i was told not to ask questions in my writing because it’s too easy,
but it’s easier to find an answer to every question you have.

my bottom and top teeth don’t line up,
even when i’m chattering in the cold.
dried skin on my over picked zit
no matter how much lotion i put on
it still crumbles like a graham cracker.
no one besides you and me know
we haven’t talked in years.
i can’t stop pulling things apart.

mouts as ashtrays and
ears that stretch to the floor.
dali’s melting clock on the back of my elbow
the base of a rolling chair
looks exactly like the arms of an octopus.
i could walk around barefoot,
i got my tetanus shot in the summer.

the dog statue my neighbor put out
has big bulging eyes
that are hiding cameras.

bacon egg and cheese with ketchup, salt, and pepper,
street hot dogs,
chopped hamburger and cheese.
food haunts my dreams.

chunks of my flesh were ripped off by a subway grate today
i cut my asshole trying to shave.
can’t stop imagining my knees flattening from impact.
i’ve been pulling my nose hairs out with tweezers.
i have a world on my right shoulder.
body pre-covid vs body during never ending covid
(doesn’t seem there will ever be a post)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pre-covid</th>
<th>during never ending covid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to make this comparison chart,</td>
<td>then i got sad.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body is my body

horrible coincidences:

- my friend got a tattoo of the word “TRUMP” on her inner lip in 2014 because her name is Tracie Rumpelsberger, so people used to call her “T. RUMP”
- i bought shampoo to tone my bleached hair. i got out of the shower and my whole head whole completely purple
- being a jew who always burns themselves when they cook bacon.
- my easter gift for adrienne arrived on passover
the cat in my apartment is a penguin in disguise
i dreamt of losing my favorite pair of shoes in a pile of sameness.
it was impossible to tell which were which,
still i knew none of them were mine.

i grew up watching caricatures of you,
meeting you is more important than you know.
and i say “more than you know” often when i don’t really mean it
i do this time though.
knowing you is more important to me
than you will ever know.

my mom gave her grandson
soy milk and said it was white coffee
so he felt like an adult.
the coffee i’ve been drinking tastes
like soy milk.

until yesterday i thought i knew what a tick looked like.
i didn’t know anyone else knew what a tangerine was besides me.

i think i’ve broken every gift my brother has given me
does that say more about how i take care of things
or the quality of gifts my brother gives?

i had a chinese donut last night that made my eyes roll to the back of my head.
beer and eggs benedict fit perfectly in my stomach lining.
i feel like i always have to pee.
sleeping, eating, showering, brushing my teeth,
why do i spend so much time taking care of this flesh prison?
fluorescent light in a room with no windows
look green and yellow,
the same way kodak gold film looks.

i’m working out for the first time in a year
my body feels like it’s going through puberty all over again.

**Pros and cons of boxers:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>feels like an extra pair of shorts and that soothes anxiety</td>
<td>they roll up my thighs and fit like underwear sometimes so what’s the point of even wearing them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i can wear them around the house and not feel exposed</td>
<td>it’s not socially acceptable to wear them outside like shorts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i feel less like a girl (i’m not a girl)</td>
<td>boxers aren’t as forgiving as the cotton underwear you buy in a pack of 6 in a plastic bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the boxers with the extra hole in the front fit me the best</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i don’t like shorts or underwear, but the combination of the two is comfortable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Thoughts that don’t seem to fit in any category:**

- i pay $84 a month for wifi that doesn’t work after midnight.
- i’ve never dated anyone who likes birthday cake
- when the sky gets dark, the night time reality I live in seems to expand and grow the way taffy does as it’s being stretched.
- i wish i could make the caption of my photography another picture
- the best snacks make the biggest mess (coffee cake, chips, queso)
- puppies with parasites have swollen bellies, like they’ve swallowed a grapefruit whole.
that’s how my body feels when anything carbonated goes down my throat
- I was told humans can break their fingers as easily as we can snap a carrot and the only reason we don’t is because our brain tells us we can’t.
- I stare at my dog every day and can’t fathom that an animal lives in my house.
- How British people pronounce “no” as “naur”
- I feel more like myself the shorter my hair gets.
- I can’t stop chewing my middle nail on my left finger that is split like my dad’s is.
- If you have a mohawk you’re an asshole, if you have a mullet you’re questionable.
- Little shirt big pants, big shirt little pants. Hard cookie soft filling, soft cookie hard filling. There has to be a difference for things to work.

**Haikus for the Youth of Sumud**

Words full of grit and
driving teeth encase the
beauty seen everywhere.

I wrote a line about best names. They were all months.
June is my favorite.

Shattered arm, broken
glass—two more twins see how I
see. Beach food with you.

Floating in between
Your frequency, collecting
Swollen hearts and hues.

The first person to
Look through blank stares to see dimensions I dreamed of.
vibrations shatter
glass, perspective, and sight.
unfathomable.

my green queen towering over my dreams, holding
us in a hazy sight.

fire and ice under
a churning lyric- pleading
to fly with its mate.

thick clunky frames conceal wisdom, beauty,
fairyness and truth.

lily of the valley
swims in me. you are
with me everyday.