

Asher Motes

Falling In

*Don't you realize our bodies could fall apart at any second?
I am terrified, your body could fall apart at any second.
Those are, you got some nice shoulders;
I'd like to put my hands around them.*
-Will Toledo, Bodys

I want to make up a scenario to hug you; breathe in your body wash and deodorant. I'll add it to the things I love, the list of things I can taste in bed; pretending you're at my back or curled in my chest, under the blue and white chevron crocheted masterpiece my great-grandmother made. Smelling of you and her house before they renovated. It still holds a delicate emptiness from after she died.

(Her own bed, her own mother's blanket spread over her feet)
(Just a week ago, she had fallen out chasing her dead husband)
It still has the memories of peanut blossoms and spice cookies.
(The ones I cried over when I couldn't get the icing right)
(even after we had made it together)

(There are parts of me you never knew)

I'm scared there's something you'll never see, a box that stays behind a lie in the wall.

(The dog wouldn't calm down, he didn't mean to kick it)
(Sometimes in November the light from the bathroom window lands just so)
(And you can see the outline of the spackle and mesh)
You keep sending songs that make me fall in love all over again. There's a warmth to the dips and dives of the synths; comfort in the droning bass.
(I would do anything for him to hold me)
The song staggers. Feels like falling down stairs. Feels like the sunrise through the window.
(I wish it would cast on your face)
(You're at home. I'm driving past)
Sometimes when I pass by your neighborhood I hang my head out the window like a mad dog. I yell out that I love you or pull the steering wheel onto your street, spurred on by a song built in the singer's car,
something about shoulders,
something about dancing,
something about falling apart.
Or giving in, crawling over your fence,

hiding out in your old playset,
pretending to be a part of your memories.
(Pretending to be something I'm not)
Extending our timeline back to before we could've ever known each other.
Before we became what we needed.
Every atom and space in between lining up just so,
so we might hold each other while the world sighs in relief,
Now, we can fall apart.

(Childe Hassam, *Poppies*)
i told you, i saw you
there, red and green
paler than you had been
before
earlier in the day
the wind rose
to meet me, and
i saw you there,
between brushstrokes
earlier in my life,
you were there
between the grasses
now,
you stand in a screen
still
more than i can ever
could ever
fathom

Author Bio

Asher Motes is a transgender poet from Minnesota. After reading Robert Frost in middle school, he has been forever enamored with images of nature. After falling in love, he has become unable to write about anything else. He is currently pursuing degrees in English and creative writing and chemistry at The University of Iowa.

December 2023