

Sara McNally

**Ode to Passing Under Tracks at the Exact
Moment the Train Speeds Overhead**

This is dying.
Or the feeling.

Or something so close
to it that dying and (feeling
as if you are) dying
are interlocking things.

But, oh, never mind it.

I want a plant that looks like a ribbon.
So green I gotta buy a dictionary
to see the word *chlorophyll* in print.
So green St. Patrick is like,
Why didn't I think of that.
So, so green I forget about ever wanting
to sharpen a blade and turn it on myself.

Oh god! To think I've ever wanted that
when there are such fresh things everywhere—

Did I tell you about my necklace?
The glass dolphin filled with clear blue water?
I think of it sometimes. And then it passes.

Dear Night Sky,

Today is my fourteenth day without a drink.
I told Erika I'd throw out the PBR but
it's still in the fridge. In the vegetable drawer.

When I told my therapist I thought I was an alcoholic
she didn't say yes I was or no I wasn't. She said
to get the alcohol out of the house. All I know is last night
I opened a can of beer then quickly baked it into a loaf of bread.

Every time a train speeds by
and I'm on the platform, I think
I'm about to die.
I think I don't have control
of my legs—who's to say if
they will walk forward or not.
When I have too much caffeine I shake
and think my heart is exploding like a star.

I miss the lake in DuBois, Pennsylvania.
How I'd go there in deep blue evenings
when the lifeguard was gone. I'd duck under the rope
and swim straight down. That's when you feel the temperature
drop like a secret. Translucent fish grazing at your feet.
Did you know I was afraid of fish for years?
It's always been like that for me.
Things with no legs. Snakes. Worms.

Once, at the lake, my family was fishing
with live bait. I was small on the ground.
No one looking, I secreted
the neon orange worms into my mouth.
And another pinch of them. And another.
Now any noodle thicker than spaghetti is inedible
to me. Might as well have been found
on the sidewalk after a rainstorm.

Mostly, Night Sky, I am asking,

does it always sting
when stars explode?
After it all?



Sara McNally received her BA in English and Creative Writing from Carlow University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She is now an MFA candidate at Columbia College Chicago. McNally has been published in *Gulf Stream*, *Mistake House*, and elsewhere.