

LOVE LETTERS TO TOSHI

Syd Westley

I.

When the light breaks, how does it feel against the skin of your body? When it rains, which hat do you wear and do you think of me when you do? It's been one hundred sixty days since I saw you, and the Earth hasn't even slowed down. There have been a great many fires which burned down the mountains, and then a rain which hasn't stopped in many months. O Toshi, it has been raining in Marin too. I have kissed a girl often and collected the rainwater in the back of her throat. There are so many words I have to give you, and so many words that I can't. I think of mom and the way that she held your hand each weekend the way I hold a girl's hand in the mornings. There is a softness in that, one that I learned from walking with you. There is a boy in me, one that I am trying to find the words to bring out. If only you had had more time, I think you would have liked him too. He keeps me company on the nights when I can't help but picture your smile. I am not lonely anymore. How do I tell you that without you I feel so much more alive?

II.

Nana, some things hold me better than others and when you left, I turned to ~~Esther~~, the Earth. She holds me too, in her hands late at night. As is light, there is soil, and I feel her in my palms and dig and dig and dig. I wish you could hear the wind's soft whistle. I wish you could know the slight bend of the trees at my touch, the feel of the stones beneath my feet.

III.

That a body could hold it all.
That a death could overflow.

A granddaughter becomes a grandson.
I am the same child, the same child.

I say you do not reject me from heaven.
I say there is no world in which we do not inherit
each other.