

To Kailee on New Year's Day

Maddy McFadden

Last night, the annoying vibrations shook through the veneer paneling,
forcing me from the wall, as I watched my leg bend
between hers for warmth, and
I couldn't make out the amber and vetiver on her neck before
my nose moved towards her ear
to say *it's too loud in here!* And,
everyone cheered as the green digits moved backwards,
as I watched myself learn about the extinct
colors of her hair—
going extinct myself, thinking, *Who the hell cares?*
Last night, I was an alien wasting time in the abyss between her and I.
Or, I was restrained dark energy,
disappearing as much as I was there,
impacted by no other energy than my own,
unknown, but trying harder to feel something more than
my fingers going numb
from the ice in my rum and coke,
accelerating—no, just forgetting to take in air
as the incomprehensible music entered my ears, and— I remembered
your hands, your sweat
under polyester and a Nike Swoosh—
There was a hummingbird in my chest. No,
not a hummingbird. A chicken,
bleeding.

And a warm egg that glowed.

You know, you were the first person I ever loved and the first person
I was afraid to be seen with.

And, the deep trepidation mixed with the excitement of you
wanting to be there with me, too,
caused my amygdala to signal my hypothalamus,
creating abnormal activity in my temporal lobes and limbic system, releasing
my own opioids,

while also ruining us.

So, there was a chicken whose breathing slowed and
warmed the muscles in my chest. But,
it was bleeding—dying and releasing fear,
unaware of the violence that calmly existed beyond the edges of your
Dodge Grand Caravan where we would feel everything and nothing, at once—
our energy in motions and colors— electric green never had a place until
then, *As your carbon atoms became my carbon atoms and
mine are always yours, too. And, always, when
thinking of you, I will glow.*

And, my thumb and knuckles brushed her leg to ask her, *when are we going to kiss?*,
remembering the way the flood poured into my left lung and my terminal extensor tendons
went numb when you first leaned into me. But,
she stared forward, talking about A Tribe Called Quest and Lou Reed as if to say,
“How am I supposed to know?”