

POETRY

THE DUCK POND IN APRIL

Mackenzie Robin

I loathe to not name a thing.

I know this creature.

I know its spine, its breath, its baby teeth.

I heard its heart flutter at 3am in February,
when we dare not hold our breath for wishes,
because it's just too cold for that sort of thing.

Let me name him 'Quiet Betrayal.'

Let me name him 'Too Tender.'

Let me name him 'Love,' for that is what he was.

You carried him to the hospital.

You carried him up the mountain.

He slept in your glove compartment
every time you drove up to my mother's house.

I ached to cradle him,
this thing you nurtured with your ice wine,
with your early morning good news,
with your secrets from your girlfriend,
with your endless time for me.

I snuck our monster to the duck pond
to baptize him,
to make sure he would not get lost in heaven if he died.
I knew he was going to die.

But as I lowered him into the water,
heart open and weeping,
I asked you for his name.
You would not acknowledge he was there at all,
keeping his head underwater.
He drowned in the duck pond and died, nameless.

How can you grieve something without a name?

You did this to me.