

She Read Palms

by Meghan Brown

She read palms.
That was her gift.
She'd trace the lines
on your skin
and tell your future
every detail
wild and clear.
Your savage life.

He made monsters
out of plastic
sold his creatures
to the movies,
sent postcards
to his mother,
every detail
wild and clear.
"This is the life."

They met in August,
sugar-sticky
cicada summer.
She held her hand out,
he said, "No, Darlin',
I've heard about you."
She smiled a crooked smile;
he put on gloves.

The fall came fast.
His pick-up truck,
her hungry skin,
then winter winter,

eyelash snowflakes, icy winds,
but when he kissed her, kissed her,
his gloves were warm against her face.

Soon they were just like us.
Convinced that no one'd ever loved as much.
Kissing places no one'd kissed,
catching secrets, secrets,
that all the other ones had missed.

But still... those gloves.

She begged him
but he said no.
She said it would
help her so
to see their future
every detail
wild and clear
so she would know.

He said: No one knows.

Then one night
he was asleep
her curled and quiet
monster-maker,
and she couldn't help it
couldn't stop herself
the gloves came off.

And the whole world was there in his hands.

The time that he would be late for the party.
The time that he would hold her as she cried over a broken dish.
The time that he would need her to be kind, and she would be unkind.

The time that he would love her so much more
than anyone had ever loved anyone.

The life they would build.
Their little house, his studio in back,
their three children, Lucy, Violet, and August.

Their bodies, aging gently.
Sharp and wizened,
laughing, laughing.
Pushing further,
loving stronger,
holding closer,
knowing deeper
till the end.

But then it all began to shift.
Before her eyes, the story changed,
everything she had ever wanted
slipping between the lines of his hands.

And she tried to get it back,
but trust is a monster made out of glass
and the future is just one more
wild, clear thing that breaks.

When he woke
it was over
and he knew.

Just like us,
it was over
now it's gone.