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The gray life got grayer.
The thrill of travel lost its excitement
And why buy anything?
They will be only threads and dust in years…
And she spent many lonely mornings,
Fading into afternoons,
Fading into darkish nights,
"Turning on the silence" she says, flicks the switch.
The muted white noise flickers and becomes absolute.
The voices around her become pastel and when everyone is gone –
She sees how long she can stand the screaming and pounding of the utter absence of sound.
She sits cross legged, scratchy, for it has been weeks since she shaved.
On her wall is love.
Love in black Chinese characters by her friend whose
parents are finalizing divorce.
It's tricky – this thing. This life. It's easy to screw over, hmm? She has said once to baby sister when the water was running. By now,
Baby sister has grown breasts larger and more beautiful than her own – she stares when they are in the same room.
She is envious a little. Envious of this shallow feature.
All a dull and unattractive girl like her can want.
They are both quiet and mama calls them down for dinner.
She notices then, alone, that there is mascara dripping down her face with salt.
In the mirror she is so white and so afraid – really afraid.
It's so easy to mess up, and when you do, do you know it, and can you start again?
Has anyone got it right, maybe like Zorba,
Dying by the window and on his feet?
Will I become a boss – The Boss?
But they were only fiction, you must remember she thinks.
Then angrily she warns: don't touch my hand.
But she is alone and no one is trying.
And then she is in college and filling the sketchy dorm bath with water.
The tub is stained brown from the rusty tap
and the water is sending puffs of steam
rising.
She keeps a voice speaking in her head always.
A running narrative and she never lets the voice stop.
It sounds like her, a little, but lower, huskier. She hates silence:
So I have left the unopened twizzlers on the floor –
red. cherry.
I close the door and I can't fall asleep
anymore.

I pace the dirty floor,
Feet sticking to old gun and the ac is dripping
methodically.
  Mockingly.
I throw my alarm.
I cry.
I pick up the pieces.
I throw them away.
I walk to a drugstore and under flickering fluorescent light
I sniffle
And pay for batteries
    (HALF PRICE IN NEON ORANGE!!!)
And as the clerk hands me my change
     I look at her – beg with my eyes.
Ask me.
Ask me – I challenge.
Instead she chews her gum
Quick and noisy
Those wet sucking sounds and the red of the gum and yellow of her teeth
Cause me to stare.
I am staring at her mouth while she looks past me
Irritated.
So I walk out into the sun.
This hot sun. Blinding, really. I will be red when I get back. Too warm I think.
The air conditioning is working now though.
Its too cold.
I turn it off.
I can't listen to music.
I am absorbing their nervous beats and high strung notes. I shiver. I pace
back and forth and up and down the tiny room.
She comes in with her cell and her nails and her crispy hair -
voice purring into the phone.
I take the laundry she hands me and wash it
    without soap.
She doesn't notice and I eat something brown on my shelf until I feel
Like a bloated mass and then
I feel so stupid.
I run miles.
Back and forth between-
    around the building
There is grass on both sides of me.
Green and perfect and smelling so strongly of some sort of life.
I call home on her tiny phone
     that evening in my bed with the purple sheets up around my ears. A little wordless.
            Worthless.
And everyone wants to know what I want.