

Where We Went To Escape Him

i

I picked you up from your house[1]
and drove[2] to the beach[3]. Raised
inland[4], family lore dictated that

you dip your toes in every surf
you come by[5]. We ran the tideline[6]
shoes like necklaces or shackles.

ii

On the other side of the waterfall
there is rock, enlarged in legend.[7]

We knew the month ahead
would stretch out far beyond

what we could imagine[8]. Maybe
that was a special kind of month

made only for us. The sort that
keeps the promise of you returning.

When it ends you'll be at the door
as cool as the day you left[9] twice[10]

ready for me opening the door
at no. 30, four house moves ago.

[1] to stop the man banging on the door / from getting into the house / you rented with your boyfriend.
/ You waited on the flat roof at the back, / low enough for you to jump / you needed to /

[2] Sorry for being taciturn; / I was new to driving / and needed to concentrate / a little more / than you
were used to. // I love how / you read the landscape / with such hunger / to take in everything you
could. // I read the road / while you read ecology /

[3] Singing Stay Stay Stay by Taylor Swift, / which has abusive elements to it / but also a really catchy
chorus / and really there's a joke in the narrative / of a song / where a football helmet / stops the abuse
/ causing serious damage, / deflects the negativity.

[4] In the flat lands of the prairies

[5] Was this a tribute to your father? On that beach / I asked you why your father was never / in any of
your recent stories. / Because he died, you said. / Of course. / Forgive me.

[6] Did we? Were there kite surfers / on the beach?

[7] It was, I'm sure, a small boulder / that accommodated the two of us / brought at some point back in
time / by a glacier or river. Pictured now, // we are ants on a vast plane of igneous rock, / though I'm
sure we hung limbs / off each side / to accommodate ourselves. // Even in my arms, I knew / I missed
you.

[8] Gregorian calendar would have it / at 50 scores or more, / though who's counting?

[9] to go to a wedding / back home.

[10] following the accidental meeting / in the park.