

I don't remember
when I started avoiding
mirrors.
Only that it was sometime between
half past reality and a quarter to insanity.
Somewhere between the edge of approaching darkness and a cliff.

I don't remember
ever intentionally avoiding
mirrors
but I remember
realizing that I was.

Catching my reflection in a fogged
mirror
hair dripping from water or tears
eyes ringed with exhaustion and the darkness of poison seeping out of my mind
and I tore my eyes away.
You're not supposed to stare at strangers.

I don't remember
forgetting what I looked like.
The memory fell away shard by shard
a mosaic shattering and falling out of place
until we were asked to draw self portraits
and I couldn't.

I don't remember
losing myself.
One night I simply faded away
and nobody noticed.
Not even me
until one day I glanced at my reflection in a polished shop window
and a stranger stared back.

It scared me.

i hid from the stranger for weeks.
Months.
Avoiding my reflection
but everywhere I went,
I was there.
Lurking in puddles bleeding gasoline rainbows.

Looming in the dark static of the TV screen.
Hiding in the distorted reflection of spoons
I was there.
But it wasn't me.

Who was this girl with protruding collar bones?
Whose green eyes stared back at me?
What stranger had plastered their face to every reflective surface in my house
and peered back at me from behind crooked glasses?
I didn't want to get to know her

but I couldn't run from me forever.

I don't remember
the first time that I stared back at the reflection in the
mirror
But I remember that each day it got easier.
Because in the stranger's reflection I saw pieces of that broken mosaic,
parts of me that I thought I had lost long ago.
And I started to piece my memories back together.

Somewhere in that stranger's face I was hiding.
Shattered fragments of me still remained.
Maybe in a smile
or a laugh
or the flecks of gold around my irises.
And yes.
There.
For a second I see myself.
I'm relearning how to recognize me.