j. a. tyler

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WHEN THE HEIGHT OF YOU OUTREACHES ME

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When the height of you outreaches me your nerves will show and I will know that you are panicked because your knees will shake and you will ask questions that you don't wait for me to answer. You will drift out. The books in your room will be growing and the pictures dwindling and the chapters will be longer still until your face is only now inside of it and I am in another room counting the rain as it falls. I will say to you that the rain is clicking again but you will not hear me because you will be unfocused on the pages, waving your hands mindlessly, not again thinking of me. And the main thing I wanted to tell you was that the well was filling up and I was hoping you would hear that we don't have a well and that would bring you back, but it doesn't and the distance between us is water that can stretch indefinitely.

WHEN THE HEIGHT OF YOU OUTREACHES ME

When the height of you outreaches me who will be listening at your door to make sure you are sleeping? Who will be the one to take hands that are big and still tuck the blankets in and down your side, hugging you to the borders of the bed, making the mattress a dream, helping you to hallucinate in the night the love of all good things? Who will be the one there when you wake to sing your eyes closed again and make your heart still to a moment when we almost believe you have died but in fact you are only covering your sensibilities, honing the craft of dismemberment? And who will be the one watching you walk the dreams you dream and making sure that you do not step past the line that says where you exist and where I end, where I exist and where we together become separate and fall distinctly apart?

WHEN THE HEIGHT OF YOU OUTREACHES ME

When the height of you outreaches me it will be the same day we are outside together cleaning the leaves and sticks from the gutter and the ladder will tumble down beneath me and I will find that instead of clinging to the metal and bending my legs off the house rails you are there beneath me holding each of my feet and stabilizing me when I should be clattering down. I should have fallen and broken out my hip, turned my shoulders into pins and screws and plates and numbness. I should have survived but gone to a pharmaceutical place, where the drugs I drink with orange juice and eggs would be the way I remain through days and sun. I should have cracked open my bones and seen once and for all if they were really red jelly filled as you told me sometime long ago and as I willingly believed.

WHEN THE HEIGHT OF YOU OUTREACHES ME

When the height of you outreaches me we will remember back to the times when we didn't have a cat that we held close to our chest and took a picture of. The old man of me and the young man of you and the difference between the two of us. This black cat that didn't cross our path but cradled with us in our imagination. This was the cat that didn't exist and lit up our allergies. We sneezed new worlds and marveled at the way our collarbones projected. Our chest, the chest of you and me, instead of holding still a kitten purring in our ears it would be a chest that is racked with bruised texture and thick when we breathe. Our breath that is doubled and then retreating.

WHEN THE HEIGHT OF YOU OUTREACHES ME

When the height of you outreaches me we will teach each other to wink and then to blink and then to close our eyes slowly and watch the world fade. The color dragging out like blood in water and it pools and uncoils and travels. We travel. You once rode my back to a far reach and plucked a flower from a single tree and saw how the green of the leaves there were the same green of our same leaves and there was nothing else for us to learn, from then on, after that traveling. The weight of your thoughts bending down on me, the branches heavy with spring snow, you rolling your eyes by moving our head in a jagged circle, you, pretending to wink by blinking once or twice in earnest and asking me if that was it, or smiling like you nailed it because in my mind you did.

WHEN THE HEIGHT OF YOU OUTREACHES ME

When the height of you outreaches me we will be the only left who can catch the wind in our hands and eat it down into our body and then rise up and out of this place. In the clouds we split, and you will watch the ceiling quiver and will yell down to me what everything looks like, me trying to picture it but me unwilling to see. You will ask if I can see the sun and I will say no. You will ask if I can see the moon and I will say no. You will ask if I can see the tops of this world and I will say no. Giant in the clouds there is nothing I can see. I was you until you grew up. You were me for awhile there, sinking into my knuckles. There is separation now. There is distance, you in the sky and me still here, grounded, looking up.

WHEN THE HEIGHT OF YOU OUTREACHES ME

When the height of you outreaches me we will find that your shoes no longer fit, that the three and four have become nine and ten and the shorts that once canvassed your legs no longer have coverage. The hair you have grown is growing out still and we have cut it beyond remembrance. Your hair is my hair and we are still the same in the least little places. And we are seeing these changes as they flutter in and out of us, palpating like tiny hearts in our sputtering bodies. And the shoes on our hall rug are the final point to this wordless conversation. There has been growth. There has been change. There has been a volcano. We are stuck in a flood. We have not slowed down. We have in fact sped up. We are in fact spinning. We are, the two of us, dousing each other in similarities and coated in skin. We are and were.