

Insomnia

MADELAINE LONGMAN

Thoughts cannot hurt you. When flies settle on the ceiling,
don't listen to the fever of their wings. Honesty
does not have to be a knife. Still, your skin mixes
with molecules of air, lit cities clenched in your heartbeat.

When you check your reflection, use the window. A sheet
of glass and silver won't show you as you are. Look to stars
and smog, swaying hands of trees, traffic burning green
against the night. The age of sky above shell-grey streets.

Trace the shape of your hand to remember you are not a bird.
Your bones are not empty. When the beat of carbon and marrow
moves in your limbs, listen. Walk yourself loose from steel
bands of a fracture. You can't seem to hold
your ribs closed, but your chest does not break. The air
is not the color of a migraine. Smudge the list off the back
of your hand, the bruised ink of unfinished tasks.

Birds are not calling out your failure. They are calling
each other home.

Madelaine Longman is currently completing her undergraduate honours degree in English and Creative Writing at the University of Calgary. She plans to pursue a master's degree in poetry. "Insomnia" is from her Accumulation of Rooms series.

TO SUBMIT YOUR POEM FOR THE SPRING 2015 COMPETITION, OR FOR INFORMATION:

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