

‘بوتكلم’ engraved across my right ribcage  
‘maktub’  
‘it is written’

writing demands introspection  
for a girl on the pursuit of pleasure it would make sense to steer clear  
of the mind and all its bitter gore hiding in the recesses  
i like to write anyway  
i am still struggling to come to terms with the state of the universe  
prone to chaos  
stupid, senseless

in the midst of the frenzy

uphill seneca navigating the pouring rain—across the street people are huddled under their  
umbrellas and i long for that but this awning will do for now

a broken metronome my chest rises falls rises falls i’d feel better if they found my room clean i  
am too far gone to care i make it five minutes out the door with an army ant body only to turn  
back because it’s cold. when i get home my roommate saves my life maybe someday i’ll tell her

south lake union is always beautiful under the sun but this time i am numbly staring out of a  
high-rise at the sable sky people watching

midnight commuters  
peering through floor-to-ceiling windows

wondering if someone out there feels as used and empty as i do and why we resign ourselves  
over and over

i have seen my fair share

of downtown hotel rooms and condo balconies. i was always a fan of a bird’s-eye view

it is always terrifying and captivating and lonely up here  
it is always freedom

of bars in single file framed by bustling rainbow crosswalks and the same bay i am mesmerized  
by at work and the route i occasionally take home when the traffic light turns green just right  
i am home wherever i sleep, wherever someone will take care of me for the night  
heaven knows i can’t bear to myself

i get to know the people i sat next to for ten weeks and their families and i present my final  
laid bare i have nothing to lose i may never see any of them again

these words are heavy to hold and i am tired

my english professor takes some of my burden away allowing herself to be vulnerable as well  
a small, intimate point in time granting me raw humanity

i walk to her office after class unsure how to muster more than a ‘thank you’

i waited 18 years for this moment

for someone to look at me and understand my ache

i want to share her burden too and i want to hold the grace she sees in me—the same grace that  
shimmers on her skin—dear to my heart, 優美 perpendicular to my first tattoo

i keep returning to this memory throughout the year and i decide i will explore all the english  
language has to offer—i will spend the rest of my life studying the human condition—in hopes  
that i can leave the same imprint she made on me, that i can ease the burden on at least one  
student

if there is one thing i’ve retained here it is that to be utterly alone in a world so vast and  
magnificent is a hopelessness fierce enough to inspire insanity, a chest collapsing in on itself  
human connection is vital it is at its purest form vivid and piercing it is the reason we wake

this fulfills and strengthens me

this is why i stay alive

i write this as a reminder

in the midst of the frenzy

i believe there is an overarching order and purpose

entropy itself reveals method behind the madness

atoms once swept across the universe—dashing, making love. now they are where they are

meant to be: raindrops strewn, my roommate’s ice cream, duvets, the desk my english

professor

sits upon as she buries her head into her hands and i feel the burn in our noses as our eyes  
water

it hurts to confront my own thinking, to try and make sense of my pain

it hurts to write

last year i met a history major from harvard and he described writing as “compulsive” and  
“traumatic” i trusted him but i never knew what he meant until the first time i cried during an  
essay

this year i asked a ta what she thought about that perspective. she agreed and added  
“therapeutic”

to delve into myself is to know myself

my desires

my tears

my solitude

my fleeting bonds

i pinpoint how i cope, these defining points in my life

then i grasp what i’m coping with

it is written—i could not have followed any other path

and so i write and it starts to make sense and it hurts and it heals