

Reasons for Staying (inspired by Ocean Vuong's Reasons For Staying)

1919, peanuts and pine, and the tangy smell of cologne and sweat mixed together.

Ocean water lapping at my toes, bringing me back to cleaner days, reminding me of her.

The train to Roosevelt Island, of black rail and steam and fog, lurching there and back again.

Sparkler candles from my sixteenth birthday. A miscellaneous collection of bottle caps, all donated from friends. A book of pictures.

Cable cars. Hot spicy soup. Three quests for a sunset, three kings for a prince. Addendums, beginnings, and wandering the hospital hallways. The boy with the arab strap.

That my aunt persevered, and taught herself to smile.

That the sun rises after every dark night.

That you can start again and again, and no one can tell you when to stop.

That beyond the horizon lays more land, more sea, and more wonder.

The sky right after a thunderstorm, when it's still a furious dark gray, and yet sunshine creeps through its cracks of the clouds (which I always hated, but learned to love).

The soft morning glories in my hands, showered in sunlight and love. That Nature could be so tender, delicate, and pure. That yellow was no longer my least favorite color, because the best lessons are learned from experience.

The way wind whistles my bedroom windows, and the willow trees call to me, mournfully shaking their leaves.

4am; lamplight, softer than the rain. Dried flowers. Guitar music wafting down the streets of Boston.

How the only one that could forget me was me.

How I could be alone.

How I could love every small thing.