**palindrome**

by Nate Marshall

*after Lisel Mueller*

on her profile i see she has two kids,

now one she had in high school, now none

at all. she is unaborting the one

she didn’t not have. she is unpregnant

in eighth grade. she unresembles

her favorite pop singer pink. she uncuts

her hair, unchops it long and feminine.

her new boyfriend is forgetting the weight of her.

she is leaving her new boyfriend. he is forgetting

her phone number. she is becoming my girlfriend

she is picking up the phone and i am on the line

ungiving a goodbye. her best friend is trading letters

between us. we each open letters

from ourselves with hearts on the outside.

she is transferring to our magnet school. she is moving

to a neighborhood close by. we are separating

at the lips. we have never kissed behind the school.

she is unchecking the yes box on the note and i am taking away

my middle school love letter. i am unmeeting her cop father

and her chicano moms. we are walking into baskin robbins

throwing up gold medal ribbon ice cream into cups.

it is rounding into scoops and flattening into gallon drums

of sugar and cream and coldness. we are six years old.

maybe we can go back to then. i am unlearning

her name, the way it is spelled the same

backwards. how it flips on a page, or in my mouth.

i have never known words could do that

until 5 minutes from now.

**Backwards**

By Warsan Shire

*For Saaid Shire*

The poem can start with him walking backwards into a room.

He takes off his jacket and sits down for the rest of his life,

that’s how we bring Dad back.

I can make the blood run back up my nose, ants rushing into a hole.

We grow into smaller bodies, my breasts disappear,

your cheeks soften, teeth sink back into gums.

I can make us loved, just say the word.

Give them stumps for hands if even once they touched us without consent,

I can write the poem and make it disappear.

Step Dad spits liquor back into glass,

Mum’s body rolls back up the stairs, the bone pops back into place,

maybe she keeps the baby.

Maybe we’re okay kid?

I’ll rewrite this whole life and this time there’ll be so much love,

you won’t be able to see beyond it.

You won’t be able to see beyond it,

I’ll rewrite this whole life and this time there’ll be so much love.

Maybe we’re okay kid,

maybe she keeps the baby.

Mum’s body rolls back up the stairs, the bone pops back into place,

Step Dad spits liquor back into glass.

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