**A City of Strangers**

The life we have lived

does not cross paths here.

It does not cross paths

when you open the door for me,

nor does it happens

when I walk through

and never see you again.

A stranger will love me better

than I have loved myself.

I say *teach me*

and hold open the door,

listen to a murmured *thank you,*

and close it again.

Three Month Rule:

*After the first three months,*

*that’s when you really get to know the person.*

But I knew you from the produce section,

surrounded by sweet fruits, the robust gifts of Earth.

I watched you from the crosswalk, where the traffic lights flickered.

I learned you from across the restaurant.

Do you not know me?

Have you not seen me?

I listen to the world,

the begging to be lost in

*faceless, nameless.*

Forget self, forget meaning.

Break tethers, unbind ties.

Again the door is opened,

this time by a woman, ripened by living.

She shows me kindness

and I mistake her for interest.

I confuse human with love

and drink in her presence.

I promise her a full life,

ask her if she’s ever been heartbroken,

ask her what does she order in the mornings,

ask her if she likes to sleep with music on,

what her evenings are like.

In mind, I light a candle with her before bed

and we dance in a dimly lit kitchen on Saturdays,

eat tv dinners together.

In mind, I feed her crackers and tea when she’s sick,

call in absent to work for both of us,

just to watch her lovely being in life.

*Are you okay?* says stranger.

I do not tell her I’ve planned a life with her

because the way her hair dips into shaded eyes.

I do not tell her that I love her,

because the way her hand curved around the door,

the way her ear sticks out a bit,

the way her figure is framed by beauty.

I do not tell her because she is looking at me,

and I am afraid.

Walk through the door,

feel it close behind me.