

Marcus

Brent Pace

It is not that I miss you now
but I miss it—when I
swallowed your finger the first night
and restrained myself in deference to
your more familiar Eric von something
who calls you “muffin.”

I warm soup tonight on
a stove that burns too hot
and sleep in the living room
for the stench of my bedroom’s new paint,
Alaskan White.

And I find no wisdom here—the ashtray
in the shape of a frog, the man
who grills salami in the street
before my house, the soft rattle
noises of Rex the bunny in his
wire cage. I simply don’t find you.

And then you come to take your clothes
with Michael in your car. I’ve
washed more windows since you last
were here, have scraped paint from
the panes with a razor blade. I’ve
lost three books of matches.

You are past, not yet memory, the line
between two New England cities where
the trash begins to grow thick along
the streets. Like seeing the twins,
a niece and nephew, once before I
left, lying still like a bundled
yin and yang on a couch at home.