

Sometimes When It Burns

I can feel the sun through
this old t-shirt, covered in paint
stains & small holes, stories
I'm sure

I only wear it here around
the house, to bed & it must be more than 10
years now

I've had it, this pink rag, this grief
That what was supposed to be
our marriage, our life will never
be

You were supposed to be smart
even though university just didn't
stick, and have an eye for beauty--
Photographs
still hanging in this house even though
you're long gone

And I,
I was supposed to be smart
& driven, that career
at Stanford I cancelled before the 2nd interview,
before nursing school . The poems I wrote
ghosted on the internet & etched into
these bones

We should have travelled & enjoyed ourselves
worshipped our selves and each
other. But maybe the wounds were just
too deep.
I turned loving you into a self-
loathing I still suffer

And the sun just burns sometimes
but it feels right, still, to take off this shirt
and let it penetrate
all these layers
This hard fought skin I'm in

I've covered myself in tigers, flowers, birds &
bees. Words and burn spread
across my back

As I catch a reflection
in the sliding glass, I sit up & stretch out
my spine. The rays dip behind a mid-
afternoon cloud and cool

A breeze blows. I am topless in the back-
yard and the sounds--

Neighborhood children, the roosters
one block down, tiny chirpers in the redwoods
all dim.

I close my eyes and see the deep
red of the sun's smile