

Kelli Russell Agodon

Braided Between the Broken

This morning apologies were falling
from the trees and the apples
were being ignored.

There's a chapter in our lives
where I tried to shred pages,
where I tried to rewrite the tale.
Let's call that chapter, *The Numbness*,
or *The Boredom*, or the place where we forgot
we were alive.

That morning I woke up and wandered outside
onto the backtrail,
past the No Trespassing sign into the arms
of an evergreen or a black bear. It didn't matter
who held me then; I was moss, the lichen,
the mushroom growing on the fallen log.

No one expects perfection, except when they do,
which is always. Even you, king
of the quiet, crash
when I talk about my brokenness.
Cover up, your fractures are showing.

In my life I try to apologize for things I haven't done
yet. Those are the bruised apples of me,
the possible fruit rotting in the field.

Remember when I kept replaying melancholy?
Remember when I opened our melody with a switchblade?

*Rip out the carpet. Mow down the dahlias.
Let's ruin our lives . . .*

It felt good to hurt then—
 until it didn't, until we were left
 with bad flooring, a garden
where nothing grew.

You're asking about the next chapter
 and the one after that. You're asking
 what time I'll be home and if I need
a cloth to buff up my halo.

Let's put a comma here.
Let's put in a semi-colon and think about
 the next sentence.

I dream of erasers. I dream of whiteout,
 I dream of the song where the pharmacist
doesn't judge me for not being able to make it through
the day without some sort of pill.