**I Still Hear the Mourning Dove Cry**

Connor Drexler

There is something about the profound sadness of goodbyes,

eyes averted,

the careful position of our feet on the linoleum,

a quick embrace which feels like fauns colliding

on their first steps to grace,

which leaves me without the words I wish to be said.

I would want to explain all the little ways you made

a home for yourself

in my world of tiny recognitions.

Campfires remind me of nearly burning down forests;

barbed wire makes my shins tingle

even in the sight of their twisted sharpness,

and I haven’t smelled a cool autumn breeze

without thinking about a trail of leaves we called

the color of a rusted rainbow.

All I could ever summon from my lips

was goodbye,

my hand would only always give a single wave,

and your last footsteps down the stairs

out of the house

and into your pieces of life without me

would echo like ghosts knocking on doors

late into lonesome nights.