**Novena**

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1. Do your nails pink like smoked tilapia
2. Does the hair on your knuckles grow back darker
3. Does the sleight of the pen weigh too much in the trough of your metacarpals
4. Does the underbelly of your lips linger overlong against cold ceramic
5. Does the twist of your hair pin itself to half-cracked blinds
6. Does the pass of your palm over lime-scented flames tame
7. Does the spark of the Christmas tree make you forget
8. Is the only life sign the press of breasts to cotton
9. Is the march of your words like railroad tracks across the unlineated space because
10. you hook your wrist to write, curl knuckles to chest like a sphinx in denial;

(your arm is unbroken from nib to elbow)

1. when your fingers rim the jar candles
2. no matter how often you shave
3. and match the truss of your metatarsals to the hardwood floor you can’t afford
4. because you never share their seashell shade
5. like the crown on a chess piece
6. the craving for torn pages worshipping your soles
7. August is setting behind the smokestack
8. and leg stubble graining across smuggled wicker
9. twenty years ago the nuns prayed your hands would calcify;
10. how many sins do you think they (c)o(m)mitted?