

KATHERINE WOOLER  
**LOVE POEM**

I tried to find us a love poem.  
I looked in the grocery store behind the Kraft Dinner  
and down the aisles we wander weekly,  
debating breads and popcorn. I tried  
to extract one from the car,  
where we belt out Nicki Minaj and apologize  
for fights with leg squeezes over the gear-shift.  
I thought I could get something out of the piano  
or the waffle maker,  
but all I got were lines of dust and crumbs—reminders  
of bad housekeeping. I even went back to that parking lot  
in Armdale, searching among discarded cigarettes  
for an epiphany I know I once had, but I was distracted by crows  
pilfering garbage cans and the crackle of plastic in the wind. I looked,  
devotedly, for our love poem.  
I stared at my toes and listened  
to infomercials, pulled apart orange segments. I almost had it  
as I was falling asleep—something about the way you squeeze  
the last bit of toothpaste out for me—but suddenly I ended up  
in a dimly-lit basement, cracking billiard balls and circling tables,  
until you whispered me awake, tracing my nose with a fingertip in the dark.  
I tried to find us a love poem,  
but all I found were the white acid marks  
of an orange on my palm, making city grids from my life lines—  
a little life for us drawn in citrus chalk, with radio pop, deli counters,  
and microscopic tubes of toothpaste.