

The Heart Is Not a Synonym for the Chest

Eleanor Boudreau

What you called a *cloud* was not a cloud. I am in hell here.
Hell is a party where I don't sing, and don't dance, and
someone turns to me and says, "You are a very pretty girl.
Don't ever forget that."

I spend all night tramping up and down the staircase trying
to figure out if you really love me.

Each stair a copy of the first and each of your words a copy
of the one before it—*love, love, love*—above us an 18-wheeler
on the highway bucks and shifts—*fishtailing*—and you think
of me.

I would think of you, too, bucking and shifting, but that is
not my heart.

That is my left breast.

There is a photocopier at the top of the staircase. I make a
photocopy of my heart for you. It says: WTF?!

I am in hell and I have picked up some of the language.

If I was Eurydice I would not not be mad at Orpheus—
I'd be the register above.

The truck, our house, our life together—these things I do not miss. A reminder written out on every mirror, “You are a very attractive lady—don’t ever forget.”

This I do not miss.

The bathroom with its three mirrors—I am happy, humming to myself in the morning, when you enter. You appear behind me again and lay your hand over my left hip, like a shadow.

This I do not miss.

The bathroom beginning to look like a lobster trap with its yellow bars of reflected light and my skin turning pink with sex again—

This

I miss—the knowledge that there is blood and it is pounding, fishy rivers beneath the skin, sperming toward an inland island.