



# Gypsum

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A note about the poems so far

I mentioned this already—my process so far has been to write on this in a very freeform way, keeping something like a journal on the experience of spending time driving, thinking about Scoliosis, thinking about death, reading about it, dreaming, living, anything. I extracted the poems here from these messy notes. I did my best to record all I wanted to share here—if you'd rather just see the notebook sometime I am open to digging through it with you.

I deleted some I shared before which I decided weren't going anywhere. If there had been something here you liked and you don't see it anymore, let me know.

I found things fall into a few categories—

- ❖ Material: meditations on the actual stuff of Scoliosis, maybe their character (Scoliosis's pronoun is they/them), the stuff of the trip and the landscape
- ❖ Dialogues: conversations between me and Scoliosis, me and no one
- ❖ Rituals: instructions for writing, reports on what I actually did to prepare to write

—and so I used this apparent form to organize this collection. I gave these poems titles to make it easier for you to know when a poem begins and ends. These titles are completely arbitrary and are not at all part of the work in my opinion. Except when they're helpful to you for navigating this document, I hope you'll ignore any topic heading (e.g. **DIALOGUES**) or title (e.g. **stay stay stay**).

## **MATERIAL**

**gypsum**

grass

grass

cotton

limestone

grass

tar

scrub

yucca

gypsum

fir — FUR

grass

snow

**so so so so**

so soft so

so tender so

so kind

so      so

so      so

oh      so

oso

scoleoso

scoleosito

**cotton**

remember  
you grew up  
surrounded by cotton fields

you in a bullseye  
surrounded by rings  
of cotton  
blown dry  
bone dry

starting tomorrow  
start with cotton  
start with coffee  
drink 2 cups of coffee  
before you begin  
then cotton  
white like snow  
white like gypsum  
white like you

**snow**

it is snow?  
or cotton?

sn-

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## **closet**

i am afraid of forgetting you  
until i remember i am already forgetting you  
and have been for years  
all the years i went on living  
with you on the top shelf in the closet

## DIALOGUES

**i love you**

i love you

—

i love you

—

i love you

—



**you never knew this but—**

**1**

you never knew this but—

somewhere  
all the time  
all over the world  
all  
almost the only  
thing that is happening  
is water clinging to  
a shore  
water  
encircling  
land  
and never  
capturing  
it

**2**

you never knew this but—

sometimes  
when i go out  
i go out out out  
outside of the city  
to green burial places  
in the suburbs  
leafy graveyards  
a four by ten strip of green  
in the IKEA parking lot  
i might eat a hot dog  
while i am out  
because i do not feel  
the urgency of returning to you  
and because i am hungry  
and i would rather not sit down to eat  
i will return  
i promise you

3

you never knew this but—

i am older  
always  
so are you

4

you never knew this but—

on the internet  
there is a video of a woman  
doing yoga  
and explaining  
that humans  
store emotions  
in the connective tissues  
tendons  
ligaments  
adipose  
cartilage

you never knew this but—

inside me  
are hard substances  
spongy ones  
stringy ones  
nothing like you  
soft through and through

you never knew this but—

on the internet  
there is an essay by a man  
explaining  
that humans  
store emotions

and other things  
in the teddies  
the dolls  
the soft toys  
or the hard ones  
we keep as children

stored like a battery stores a charge?  
like fuel contains fire?  
like a cabinet holds dish soap?  
like a word holds meaning?  
like i hold you?

**what do you hold**

what do you hold?

snow

what do you love?

snow

where are you from?

snow

where will you go when you are gone?

snow

## **RITUALS**

**stay stay stay**

everything points to  
starting with everything  
go somewhere and stay

go and stay stay stay

## **open your mouth**

starting tomorrow  
just open your mouth  
as if you are going to drink coffee  
but  
say some words

put on boots  
without lacing them

## **a list of ways to die without dying**

stage your death in a play

play any role in a performance which calls for your character's death

stand at the edge of the Hoover Dam and imagine jumping

approach any cliff, overlook, rooftop edge and submit to vertigo

climb a ladder

do adventure sports but humbly and without ambition

assume a new identity

sell everything and move away

survive grave illness or injury

become baptized or otherwise initiated into a new religion, sect, cult

undertake an extreme eating challenge or contest especially one involving very spicy foods

go to nature and observe how insignificant an event your death would be for the earth and the birds and

how insignificant for you, too, in the end

grieve all the way

lose a love all the way

lose a beloved sentimental object all the way

destroy a beloved sentimental object

destroy the loves

attempt suicide

honestly i think suicidal ideation counts as the surrender is a part of it

guided trance/meditation/drug trip/alternate states of consciousness

blackout drunkenness

resuscitation by medical miracle

sex, to all kinds of degrees

## **how to write teddy death**

Receive something at some moment from before you can remember. Keep it for a long, long time. Forget about it most of the time. Keep it in a closet. Remember its existence only when you move. Move more to remember more and always check for closets before you sign. Keep every door and every window unlocked always and watch as nobody steals in to take it and nobody asks you to see it or hold it and nobody calls for it as the night comes and comes and keeps coming.