

DEAR MELISSA

TC Tolbert

Dear Melissa.

I too bleed. From

the hands. The vagina. The soft. I'm trying

to strengthen. In the mouth.

If I could.

Say. Who. I would. Be.

Less.

Present. That. Moment

held and. I don't want to.

Lie. Here

or anywhere. Else.

Dear Melissa.

I wanted. To cry. Less. Wanted

a sentence. That did. Not want.

To get away. From me the moment.

It was. Said. The body asks. First.

How. Is the respite. Of. The brain. Taught.

As early. As third grade. When.

Proves. To be many. Things. Like

waking. Up to. Wetness. Like. If

a man. Grown. Did. Place a finger.

Inside. I. Still. Cannot.

Say. Words. Are sometimes said.

To be. Deictic. To point to.

An erasure. Who is not. About

proximity. As. If I.

Could never. See you. As if. I

could. Ever take him. Away.

this is how I remember
incrementally enclosed by nomenclature
the herd of the mouth
the familiar ghost inside

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Dear Melissa
your body ocean-drawn and blood-stained
the long-tucked wind waiting to be thrown through
a stone-shaped tongue splitting from and into

between her I sleep like a shovel

*worth singing about

/one part of our bodies/.

*our disappearance is only