

22

Mason Mimi Yadira

i assume no one ever remembers me
i'm just as inconsequential to them
as i am to the person in all my baby pictures
the one with wind in their eyes
watering the plants beneath them
sweat pooling in their frilly socks
if i smile i'll choke
my relationships with my mom and my sisters and my grandmas
are all more complicated than female relationships
they're each me changing my name
reminding them i'm not a girl
only feeling comfortable with femininity
when the people around me aren't misgendering me
so i choke
as i pull my arms up walking down burnside
cool off the sweat that's been building up for hours
staring each driver in their small eyes as they pass
i was six when i was in my only car crash
we swerved off an icy road into pitch black winter
red jeep tumbling, three young children and their young mom
years later my sister and i both remember the feeling
of switching seats somewhere in the crash
after learning what a crash can do

we all climbed out of the jeep, walked back to town
leaving me with a scar on my hand that i rub for comfort
and a mother, helping and hurting me in all of my memories
see, we've changed
except our lungs still contract too hard
and our hearts still beat too fast
and our legs still shake

i can't say i'm afraid of car rides
or disappointment anymore
but i still hate driving with the windows down
i can never catch my breath
i can't push my words out when it counts now
but i cried when my mom called me my chosen name
for the first time, after not speaking for years
hurting me, then helping me