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Elegy to My Eyes

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Elegy to My Eyes

Abstract

This elegiac poem focuses on the speaker's limited eyesight as she wakes up in the morning after letting her contacts dry up overnight.

Keywords

elegy, poem, eyes, myopia

Disciplines

Creative Writing | Poetry

Comments

Written for ENG-302: The Writing of Poetry: New Poems, New Poets.

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Elegy to My Eyes
Grace Timko

Dried contacts rest on the bedside table—
warped by the cool night air and rattling
with his every breath. I touch his face
and stubble pricks my fingertips

but I cannot tell if his eyes are blue or brown
until our noses are almost touching.

I don't remember what it was like
to wake up and not have to worry
if I could see street signs—asking myself
is my vision better or worse today—

because at five years old I never thought
I would be classified as “extremely myopic.”

At twenty-one, I wake up and tear the foil
off the tiny pods holding the only two things
that literally get me out of bed
in the morning—even if my body,

my corneas are failing me. A balancing act
on my fingertip, I lightly touch my eye, blink, and see.

But here, I'm helpless. Yesterday's eyes just cracked
under the weight of his phone, the dry contacts
in pieces on his bedside table. He drives
me home because he knows I won't get there

alone. I put in my contacts through the tears
knowing that my eyesight continues to slip away.

I can't make out my own features in the mirror.