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FINALIST

**love poem (research from my high school's production of RENT)**

october again & i'm knee-deep in dramaturgy, needing some drama to purge the worry from my mouth and throat. october again, funeral month, & no one is better at mourning than me; head down, stomach sick, alive but in a world, my research informs me, where *alive still* means *under siege*. the eulogies i write are banned in five states & counting, like all of my friends' bodies. at the right time of night, they sound a little like love songs. my love song

sounds a little like this: when i die please leave my body on the steps of mar-a-lago. please tell my best friend not to go outside. please write my eulogy like a carly rae jepsen song, a little happy/a little wanting/a little utterance, utterly un-little, unashamed of wanting, of being in love. the truth is that i am afraid of it all. the truth is that i am in love with it all, my best friend with their purple hair and the drag queen in my subway car and every dyke that catches my eye in public and winks. the truth is that fear carries you through everything except anything that actually matters so i am doing the rest myself.

october again. quick dramaturgy lesson: if *alive* really means *under siege* & *eulogy* really means *love song* then mourning means *fighting for*, if we let it. the eulogies i write are for people long alive; this is my wish. that we all get up in the morning and let eulogies-that-really-mean-love-songs carry us through. that my best friend glows & lives & falls in love with it all again. that i fall in love too, that when i look at the past it doesn't feel so familiar like a funeral, or a neighbor, and feels instead like like a dyke that catches my eye, split-second recognition and then off, back to her apartment and her girlfriend & her life that i know & don't, don't have to recognize because it's not mine, because eulogy

means love song now & not *hello*