

(1) Unread Voicemail by Brittany Cole

I'm calling to say--  
well I don't know.

My words become unkempt  
when you're not on the line  
to prompt me,  
"Uh huh, go on..."

But I want you to know that  
when I see a strand of hair  
clinging to a linty sweater,  
I imagine I am a louse  
crawling along it,  
marooned.

And that  
Sunday nights when the sun has already fainted  
but the lamps are still asleep  
is why I crave to dig you up  
out of my heart  
and use you as a blanket to hide under  
so that I can separate my own darkness  
from the world's.

Because your memory treads on my chest  
with combat boots  
and your words swing off my rib cage,  
kicking and pumping and thrusting their legs  
until I am sore from the thought of you.  
I wanna hear about your hopeless crush  
on Billy Lomowski  
and the latest malfunction  
of your Toyota Camry.

I wanna hear you tell me,  
"Oh my god, you're gonna be fine,  
kid."

They put a rectangle in the ground for you.  
They should have put one down for me,  
too.