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Departure

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Departure

By Adrienne Violand

I'll be flying from Columbus on the twenty-fifth.
You could come see me off, I'm sure
if time allows us to hold on
to coffee stains on lab reports
with notes in the margins. Notes I've noted
over the months; your breath and mine.
Two lines running parallel for a while.

I don't think we knew each other last year,
but now I've seen you: a cup of coffee,
a pregnancy scare, and broken glass
with hairline cracks running away
from the point of contact,
but still intact. Still intact.
The letters rolled out of your mouth,

I breathed them in easy, even though
they sometimes scraped against my throat.
Scrapes that made sure my immune system
was in perfect working order.
Though my tongue swells and twitches
and my restless legs call me away,
I'll remember

to pack my bags with community fries,
Ramen (so much Ramen), and burnt popcorn—
You'll still find pieces in your sheets a week from now.
Pieces that are like a tattoo you forgot was on your ankle
and every time you rediscover it, you notice
another detail you missed before.
Pieces of popcorn that I'll take with me.

I'll be flying from Columbus on the twenty-fifth,
but this is just a test run. I know
in a year we'll be lapping up
job applications. We'll go out and buy staplers

even though staples don't always hold. They'll hand us each
a piece of paper and shake our hands.
Congratulations.