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We Kissed Three Times

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We Kissed Three Times

We kissed three times

on your 21st birthday. Between
your drunken/honest rambles and my
sober/jealous silence, your lips managed
to find mine in the darkness of your back
yard when we were sitting sorely
on your wooden porch. They were
quick/dead kisses; no tongue. I was
and am a gentleman, but gentlemen
can still be suckers for cinnamon eyes.

We kissed three times

because I think it made you feel loved
for a second/for once. He broke your heart
when he gave you that disease and again when
he vanished afterwards. "Who'll go
to the doctor with me to see if it's turned
to cancer?" All I could think was how
I'd kill to be the hand you held when
the good/bad news came. "I wish he could."
He made/faked love to you,

and we kissed three times.

I rocked you in the blistering December
wind like you were the victim of the worst
of skinned knees. Your bleeding mascara

painted pictures like ink blots on your face
that I interpreted: "make me laugh
sweetheart." Every joke I cracked brought
you closer to life, and soon you were
brilliant/you were you, shining bright through
a cloud of whiskey stench. When we rose, you
shook and said, "I forgot where we were;
I just knew you were holding me."
And it's funny, because after

you kissed me three times,

you'd made me forget too.

Dan Sweatt, 2009