

Rules for Grieving

do not notice the rebirth of ferns in shade
 or sniff the air near the Sweet Annie
 the unsteadiness of the bridge
 or the twisted sturdy branches of the wisteria
 do not take notice of the safe full of guns
 that you pass each morning
 and forget that you
 know the combination

Rules on What to Take

take only the things that fit in a river
 your shirt from the back of the chair
 the emptiness of each room
 the galloping horses from inside her head
 the freshly oiled saddles from
 the empty tack room
 take, the blankets
 that kept the horses from freezing

Rules on What to Say

say, fill the suitcase with undergarments
 fill it with birds
 say, mirror say, look at yourself
 as if you – are alive listen to *Hallelujah*
 say eventually we are water
 undetected & floating
 say, swim
 say, swim
 say, swim

Rules for Controlling Anxiety

after four years, remove the folder
 marked: *service to military*
 from the closet bottom
 stand over the trash can for an hour
 hand shred the documents inside
 place the bag of paper
 at the top of the driveway
 know, that tomorrow the garbage men arrive
 & take it all away

Rules for Leaving

leave your half smoked Lucky Strikes
 leave, while I am sleeping
 during that exact moment when
 I feel like I am falling
 leave the fit of *together* and call it:
happenstance
 leave—
 but first say: *I don't love you anymore*
 (say it aloud repeat it till you believe it)

Rules for Staying

if there is still pain in your shattered heel, stay
 if the birdbath has become the tub, stay
 if all you knew as *green*, has turned to *yellow*
 and the smolder of the barn fire
 has awoken the neighbors
 stay—
 even when the horses are running free, stay

Seasonal Survival Guide



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Cover Photo, *Horses*,
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Origami Poetry Project

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