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Loss Word Association

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Cover Page Footnote

This piece was written and workshopped in 18X. The prompt for this exercise: describe a chosen abstract noun, loss.

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Katherine Carithers

Loss

It aches and stays and settles into your muscles - which you stress and strain. The pain, in a way, feels good. Like bitter-sweet muscle memory and sweat on skin. With time tightness loosens, tension eases, and you continue moving with that never-quite-healed-breaking-point stuck in your skin. And it's a quick step. An all at once shortness-of-breath-snapping-of-tendon-unraveling-of-sinew

until your sore body

pushes and pulls that bit of dislocated soul
back into place.

Loss

A stained-glass window whose reflection no longer plays across the tiles, whose water-colors washed away. There are faint traces of their laughter in the sunlight that throws dust and shadow across the floor. If you didn't know these hallowed halls, if you have not loved them and loved in them, you might not notice. You might think the window pretty, which it is, not knowing that it is a painting of what once was.

Caroline Cook

Loss

Loss is the sound of footsteps, getting farther away

Loss is the sound of a door slamming shut so hard you feel it in your teeth

Loss is the feeling of morning, fog, dew, and air that bites, when the last thing you wanted to see was the sun rise

Loss is the sound of birds chirping at 4am, forcing you to confront that you've been up all night

Loss is the absence of birds chirping, when you'd give anything to know that the earth was still spinning

Loss is crushing a spider under a book, and feeling guilty about it

Loss is wearing colors to a funeral because you can't bear to wear black, not again

Loss is the way it feels to watch words get caught in someone else's throat

Loss is the way gravity makes itself known

Loss is, sometimes, not losing anything—sometimes loss is knowing right where something is