

PETER TWAL

## WE SET CONTROLS FOR THE HEART

And Death in a pair skinny jodhpurs waits off screen, its riding crop, skeletal closeness, leather crackle tickling my ear  
I am a memory framed through boney fingers You, an abundance of red, overexposed eye A text from across the room  
*Again* When I shear my hair, I become a body of refugees, my head so war torn, my roots retreating and you run  
in circles with the scissors, lapping up what's left Between whose couch cushions will you one day find my body A pathetic

penny, face erased, a phantom limb holding a bouquet made up of all the red cups in the world like *Hello, this is my heart*  
*with its shitty bowl cut* Impossible to love anymore, the sight of our disassembling feels forced like God, obnoxious, begging  
for pictures, *hold my seat, bro*— read receipts with each message If I Was I always this thin, a hair whittled down to the  
bone How was any of this ever mine, in me Remember when I controlled even the birds, made them feed on the

growths on your shadow Moldy emotions in that red desert and now a living room stage where you shoulder me to the front,  
soldier me to my knees, solder some scrap metal over my body How useless a Mars Rover metaphor seems right now when I  
haven't even mentioned distance but God, a text— *Again* Me: *Trying not to lose track of my limbs so I'm actually peeling myself back*  
Saving me for later so the birds can watch, wing in wing *A land mine, a love note* My heart

finally clicks on loud under your foot, a cassette player taped to my chest, and a laugh track of people  
crying *Pathetic penny Peace treaty* Death yelling *action* yelling *action* yelling *action* *figure* *Was I exploding last night or*

## Come Home to This and with a Face

And the embarrassment a train must feel when another  
train out-screeches it at the station      In front of everyone, a man

making a living handing out pinwheels made of bone      What smarts an explosion  
must possess      the control to say *I will only blow up this far*

in the action movie all my friends make of my life      In the rearview mirror really clear  
now, the face of God formed in the bruise on my face      a holy

hook      and the fishing line from my mouth      tangled but streaming  
out the window like kite tails on a beach      (A tide      the hands dragging you back and off

the cliff edge where memory ends)      Your world picks up speed around me      the radio speaks  
another language      and when someone cuts me off, I yell      *No one ever thinks to ask*

*how many light bulbs it takes to change a light bulb      do they, you asshole*  
and out the window goes my radioheart, a tumbleweedheart      endlessly

rolling with the wrong B roll looped behind it      and that night, Death totally getting me  
back with the shaving cream on my hand in front of all my friends after we crash