From “Occidimus” by Nikela Reed

I remember it like it was last night. The street lights flickerin above me. The smell of Newports. The hot September heat.

My day one, Jessie, was sittin next to me on the yellow parkin block, passin a roach around like we is right now. Wearin the chain his pops gave him the day he died. Just chillin, talkin bout our next move. Reno was choppin it up with Swavo. It was like any day on the corner

Then out of nowhere we see a beaten-up 2005 black Buick Lesabre. Windows tinted. Front busted. The mood of the corner took a turn from chill to on edge. Next thing you know, somethin made my eardrum explode.

I yelled to my crew “hold the block down” Jessie grabbed me by the shoulder, pushin me down to the ground. He reached for his clip. The expression on his face was one of horror. He lifted himself up from the block and fired at the car, as Reno sprinted to the middle of the parkin lot, glock loaded. As if it were the fourth of July, he sprayed fire in the direction of the car.

From “Rabbit Hole” by Xiaoyan Kang

I went to the market today, bought a live fish. I wanted to replicate that soy braised fish you always made for us. But when I got home I realized... I don’t know how to kill a fish.

You always thought I’m too... weak, especially as compared to you. I hated that. But I guess you were right. The fish stared at me, with its big shining eyes. There’s too much white in fish eyes, which makes them scarier. I know you would say fish eyes work in a different way, it’s not really staring at me blah blah blah - but it gives the feeling, which made me want to run away. You might not understand that. Of course not. You never understood my *weak* feelings.

Anyway, so the fish didn’t make it to the dining table. I ended up buying a tank for it - Don’t scold me for wasting money. Not this time.

I hope it won’t die. The fish. I could never keep anything alive, except Lea, thank god for that. But if the fish dies, I guess that’s a good thing too - then I can cook it.

From “fallow.” by Christopher Lysik

Set a Plate out at the table.  
Leave a Nightlight in the hall.  
Turn the Covers down each Evening. Catch the tears before they Fall.

Take the Pictures off the nightstand.  
Tear your books down from the Shelf.  
Sure feels nice sometimes to Throw them through the air, watch them Crash back down to earth.

Lay your Head upon my knees, and I will Weep for you.  
Let my Spirit carry yours, gentle while you Sleep.

Let your Body rest,  
it’s far older than your years  
and you are Tired...  
The Lonely Phantom of West 9th Street.

Someday we’ll both get older. Perhaps we’ll turn out Fine. The only thing that’s certain is the viciousness of Time.