

Mercy

An open hand, the sky never succumbing to its gravity. The bee swarms around its hive like an apology waiting to happen.

& if he listens closely he can hear the faint *click click clack* of the streetlight as it struggles to light itself, reminding him it's safe to return home.

Safety never sounded so quiet.

He wants to lie down with lizards. He wants to perform that magic trick—where the man cuts himself in half & pretends to be whole. He wants to be hocus to his lover's pocus.

Instead he returns to the hospital at the end of the block.

Its parking lot, lit with cameras. & he waits for the leaves of the tree in his backyard to fall, one by one like pages of a book—censored.

Perhaps muscle-spasmed.

Perhaps forgiven & belt-buckled, signed & dated to validate his existence.

Perhaps never needing compassion at all.