

It was over before it began.

The hands of the watch tick forward in the dark, glowing green. It's all you can hear.

One

Two

Three

Four

like a heartbeat, terrified.

Or a rabbit, beside you on the bed.

Time moves too fast. Throw the watch against the wall.

It all glows.

You jab your claws into foaming burns to joke about the way the muscle flinches back.

Hiss

As the acid wears your fingerprints down to anonymity,

Take vodka to the wound.

Bite

Into the chernobyl apple

knowing damn well you were done anyway.

You live your life like it will end tomorrow, always trying to assure the worst.

Always narrowly escaping, replacing more of your body with SSRIs.

You bleed radioactive green and uranium orange, like bad abstract art,

the kind dedicated to a muse who sits in the police station
with a blanket around her shoulders.

You laugh so hard you're sure you'll die of it.

It's night, and yet here you are at home
looking at your sunburned face in the mirror.

Run a hand down your skin, and watch it fall away.

There had been no fire, no fight. The ticking, that incessant
heartbeat, refuses to stop.

Who is there to call? Everyone who cares for you are here,
all in yellow,

identical beneath the wallpaper,

behind the windows,

outside the door of the hospital room.

Their faces are black and shiny and missing like your teeth. Look.

One

Two

Three

Four

The beat of an invisible song.

**The only moves to the dance are to deny the inevitable, claw at the faces of those by your
bedside for being so ugly.**

Get back.

She crowds, a blubbering, shaming fool.

Turn your head until it goes.

The foam of your lungs is pink with blood.

If only you remembered, that the very air here sealed your fate.

**That's the trick, that the rotting smell was your flesh all along. Some silly
combination of nature and nurture, genetics and codependency,
poison you could never have foreseen pouring back down your own throat.**

The watches' spool unwinds with a whirring hiss.

Do you feel the fire now?