

Forgetting

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Forgetting is a great big building
with marble floors in echoing rooms
and hallways made of brick roads
where the ice cream man from your childhood
will sell you an ice cream in the misshape of your favorite cartoon
character.

The rooms are categorized carefully;
those things that have been there the longest have earned their glass
cases,
paying a toll of patience for protection from the dust.
In one room are the toys you lost or broke:
the teddy bear with one eye and the stitches unraveling on one arm,
revealing a secret world of white fluff, the stuff of clouds and pillows,
betraying the absence of the soul you thought was there.
He looks at you with his one eye, the same way your first love looked
after your first argument;
you think you can see her still, her injured expression
reflecting briefly in the glass
of a case of the keys you lost,
the buttons that rolled into vents or the one you swallowed in first
grade,
the things your mother said but you never listened,
the indifference as you stood at your grandfather's funeral.
Everything is here, pinned and documented and labeled neatly
on tiny strips of paper, even the ice cream in your hand
you've forgotten as it melts,
the features running, the skin losing its luster as it drips down your
fingers,
bubblegum eyes melting in black streaks.