How to Walk Through Fire with Your Eyes Open

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I come from the silence, slowly broken. People shake me awake in the middle of the night, pull out their phones and type, “You scream for help in your sleep.” I tell them I’m crazy and roll back over so I can return to the dreams of all the embarrassing things I have ever experienced. I wake up laughing, because where I come from I am funny, even when I don’t mean to be, and even when I don’t want to remember. Like when I was in Kindergarten and that boy farted and then pointed at me. Everyone laughed. Where I come from, people don’t usually think before they speak: stefescope, stethoscope, epetheleoloist, epidemiologist. I tell them I can still think in English. Where I come from I want to dance, probably naked, just to show what dancing looks like when I can’t hear the sound. Sometimes, I maybe look like the happiest elephant playing with some ribbon. Where I come from, I talk to strangers who are red hot as fire, and just need someone to listen. Sometimes it’s an old lady in a polar bear sweater at a gas station buying beer at 9 a.m on a Tuesday. Sometimes it’s the man who mows his lawn in a G-string on M-43. Sometimes it’s the convicted felon at the clinic in handcuffs getting radioactive product pumped into his veins right after I do. We both think it’s liquid courage.

Where I come from, everything that is bright and higher than me is the moon, and the dogs from hell love me most.