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Clocks Divided By Moon Phases is the Square Root of Loss (Joshua Bell’s Sleeping With Julia Roberts Influence Poem)

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He smelled like pine needles and Peter Bondra was his favorite hockey player. He ran marathons to watch numbers bounce on the backs of others and because the sound of wind suits comforted his fear of crowds. His thoughts were racked with Nader and the words he heard on NPR, made him laugh and cry and feel anxious, all at the same time. There was doubt there sometimes,

in his voice, it got too loud, blocking out some of my black holes, but mostly I was hidden by the light in his eyes, bounced off of a street corner signal or the flashlight on my keys I shined in them. He was crazy about his mother’s waffles and the way the syrup flowed in and out of each crevice until the whole thing was soggy and inedible to anyone else. I gave him the clock with the numbers that fell off so the hands pointed to black holes. He told me he couldn’t live without it and I smile, because I knew a book without vowels would have gotten him further, but the fact that he could make up time helped me sleep better. He wore the blue and grey sweater I found for him at the thrift shop near my hometown. He let me take it off slowly so I could run my hands over his stomach and tickle the spot near his equator until he fell over in fits of laughter that only I could sweep up with my broom of straw and put the pieces neatly back in place. Once he decided to take us East to his parent’s place and he told me my anxiety about it was cute. I told him I would throw up cuteness on the floor. He didn’t think anything of me being a dreamer or the fact his parents were both doctors. He said they could surgically manipulate any flaw I had, if it made me feel better about the situation. But he liked my large feet and the way my right eye drooped
when I was drunk off Sangria. He told the same joke five times before realizing it really happened and it wasn’t a joke but a cosmic lapse in judgment. That same late night, I caught him watching an *I Love Lucy* marathon, and he recited Poe in an Indian accent then cried because the world was too cruel to the lonely. Then he stuck his fingers in every sofa cushion to find the feeling of being squeezed too tightly and held a little too closely to crumbs that once offered a fulfillment too strong to measure. After though, as I stared at falling ceilings, infomercials promised self love and eggs without shells and he stopped melting down daylight. I heard his heavy footsteps as they made their journey to bed. He apologized for time lost and we made up dreaming together, heads on shoulders while his chalk fingers traced numbers and algorithms onto my whiteboard stomach and he admitted his work was never visible. I was in love with him when he was taken over by numbers and figures. *No one else can say the same.*

— Victoria Blevins