When you look out, the night is orange. For a lingering second, you think this may be the new normal, burnt umber stretched across an endless fog. When the morning comes, the orange will be bright, not garish and man-made, but bright like a flame, rich and warm and all-encompassing. It will stay that way until the fog rolls over. You do not question the new normal. It doesn’t feel right, and it doesn’t feel wrong. It feels normal. You accept it. You nod and lie back down.

It’s never been this quiet. Your home is rowdy, voices strewn about the halls. The sound of a yell is Pavlov’s bell, and you bark without hearing the words. When the quiet does come, it is sure to be broken. You never know what to do when it stays intact. When your house is quiet, your head is loud; you must sit with your thoughts. You must sit and try not to be afraid.

But courage is a coward when you are fear’s object. Fear follows every fucking day, in the news, the sermons, the streets. Fear masquerading as hate masquerading as love moves to your mother’s voice as she seeks out slim shoulders and soft cheeks. When you cry in her arms, you see it resting on her bedside table.

You are so tired of being feared.

A sound shatters the silence: a car whirring past like the wind. Its headlights disappear under the orange sky. You’re grateful to be interrupted, and you try not to notice how pathetic that is. You try not to think about the silence anymore. You try not to be afraid. You try not to notice. You try to forget.
But forgetting is a shell-shocked soldier; his raw existence is rife with remembrance. Battle creeps into peace, pouncing in private moments of pleasure and placidity. Forgetting your fear means forgetting your transness. Forgetting your transness means forgetting your body. Forgetting your body is the battle, impossible to win. Even now you feel the weight of your chest as your back starts to strain. Your shoulders are so small on you. Your hips are so hollow. They want to hold a child but harbor a hand resting its limp wrist.

Forgetting your body is like forgetting your name. You can push it away, bury it, hide it until it is near unrecognizable, but the knowledge will always be there. You cannot make others forget. Best if you stop trying.

When you look out, the night is orange. For a lingering second, you wonder why you’ve resigned yourself to acceptance. You know the sky is not orange. At the very least, it wasn’t orange. Things haven’t always been like this. You know they shouldn’t be. And it doesn’t feel right. But it doesn’t feel wrong. It feels normal. You accept it. You nod and lie back down. You are so tired.