

## Spring Aubade for My 22nd Birthday

(March 14, 2025)

*"Dawn is a friend who never waits for your permission."*

—S.K. Valenzuela

You wake  
    into the color  
of almost-light  
    sky bruised pink  
        and unpromising,

a single mourning dove testing  
    the air  
        for sound.

The lawn steams,  
    its dew folding  
        into an air.

No candles.  
No breakfast song.  
Just your body,  
    a quiet kind of aware.

The journal from last night  
    lies open,  
        still remembering  
            what you thought  
                was important.

No blood moon,  
no moth-wing ache,  
    no burn to catalog—  
        only the ghost of your hand  
            in the crease.

You write nothing yet.  
    You just read the quiet  
until it stops  
    defending itself.

There are dreams hanging like soft strawberries overhead—  
one where I live by the river thick with books,  
a life built from drafts  
and stacks,  
spines cracked open like prayers  
I forgot I knew—

another,  
where Arthur and I are boys again,  
pockets full of acorns  
blossoms and questions.

In this light,  
even doubt softens.  
Not gone,  
just shelved—  
as winter scarves in April.

I think of what it means  
to greet your own life  
without asking it  
to change for you.

The birds begin  
again  
without permission.

I let them.  
Let them  
name the morning  
I nearly forgot  
I had.