

Contribution

By Megan Kudla

I thought you understood what I meant when I said those words to you.
I thought I said those words with kindness, I thought you heard the inflection of my voice
not as sharp and cold but as ordinary as our conversation on an ordinary day is—words
like soft fires and inflection like the sun, two friends whose blood runs ninety-eight degrees.
I didn't understand what you meant when you said those words back to me. You said you were fine. But
what does fine really mean? Are we still at ninety-eight degrees? No. Today temperatures spike. Your
blood now boils. Boils red hot. No more sunshine or soft fires
—hot. Hot like your tip of the tongue taste buds gone, boiling until bottom is burnt
flowing from a cut deeper than paper. The tip of my tongue was a secret blade, cold and
careless, but it was a secret to me. you kept that secret from me when you said you were
fine. now i know you're not fine. i'm misjudged, misled, mistaken, misunderstood—this is
me. my words made you bleed my words are now your creed your blood no longer runs
ninety-eight degrees...
come back to me.